BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER.

SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 441. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 12TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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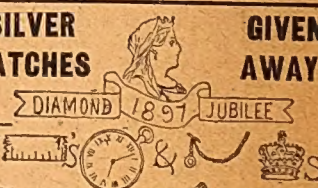

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SHORT STORIES

No. 441.] For the Week ending June 12th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

Commences To-day.

By FRED WHISHAW.

Author of "The Boyar of the 'Terrible.'"

CHAPTER I.

A BRUSH WITH THE MATABELES.

I USED to imagine that if anyone possessed a just grievance against Destiny, it was certainly I. I began well—indeed, in the best possible way—with a public school and university education; but whether it was that Nature had provided useful talents with all too niggardly hand, or whether I had neglected the pursuit of mere learning in favour of the far more important acquirements of cricket and football and running and so on, in all of which accomplishments I was somewhat eminent both at school and college, or whatever other reason there may have been for it, it is certain that when my father informed me that it was now time that I prepared to shift for myself in life, I found, to my surprise, that it was the most difficult thing in the world to set my hand to any single thing that would bring in a silver piece towards that end.

My father had, indeed, at various times suggested many different channels by which the final object of a young man's existence—"a living"—might be attained. He hankered from the first for the Queen's Services—or shall I say for the Queen's pay, and especially for the pension, which is so soothing to the "worn-out" servant, shelved in his prime from further service?

But I would have nothing to say to the Navy, having plain tastes, such as *terra firma* to walk upon, and more scope for my natural physical activity than is afforded by the limited area of a quarter-deck, and as for the Army—well, I loved the idea of it, as ardently as my father himself; but I entreated my parent to allow me to pass into Sandhurst as a University candidate, that is, to allow me to go through with my Oxford course, and then try my hand at the Sandhurst examination under the privilege of age offered to candidates coming up from the Universities, rather than renounce Oxford altogether (and with it my secret hope of becoming a "blue"), and go to Sandhurst straight from school, or crammer, like the majority of youthful would-be warriors.

But, alas! though I achieved in a manner my "blue," or a partial blue, having been chosen to run as Oxford's second string in the hurdle race in the inter-University sports, at the Queen's Club (for though I played for my college both in cricket and football, and was more than once called upon to act as substitute for some player more fortunate than myself in the University team itself, yet I never actually achieved the highest distinction in either game), in spite, I say, of my fair success as an athlete, my hopes as a warrior and servant of Her Majesty were doomed to disappointment, for I failed miserably to pass the Sandhurst examination, and found myself accordingly stranded.

It was at this critical moment that my father pointed out to me that I had enjoyed an expensive education and must presently shift for myself, since my brothers and sisters must also be educated—there were eight of them, all younger than myself—and, therefore, it was necessary that I should remove myself "off his hands" as soon as convenient. It must not be supposed that my father was unkind or harsh in this matter; on the contrary, he was sympathetic and hearty and kindly confidential, and all I mean is that what I have said was the gist of his remarks.

"I am most ready, father," I said, "to do anything reasonable to get a living; you wouldn't ask me to sit at a desk all my life, knowing me as you do, and how I hate indoor work and all that. I'm awfully sorry about Sandhurst, but—can you suggest anything else?"

In the end—for I need not waste time over our weeks

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Threw up i s head, plunged, an l fell forward.

and months of consultations and inquiries—it was determined that I should emigrate to South Africa in order to join the Bechuanaland Police Force, or any other militant body that would enrol me and accept my services in return for a modest stipend, which father kindly undertook to supplement by an allowance of £100 per annum.

Then I had a piece of luck, for just about the time of my arrival at the Cape the Matabeles under old Lobengula had filled up the measure of their offences against the *protégés* of England, and it had been determined to march to Buluwayo, their capital, and end or mend them as the case might be.

Young fellows like myself, with no particular occupation, and with no more pronounced desire in the world than to take a rifle and go forth to have a fling at anyone willing to be shot at, were volunteering by the score, and among them I, too, offered my callow services and was accepted with the rest. And so, after a period of drilling and practising of the art of riding, in which I was less proficient than in most other forms of exercise, I found myself equipped and in the field as a trooper of Jameson's Buluwayo force, and on my way to help chastise the Matabele and make a little geographical change in the map of Southern Africa by taking over their country and making it our own.

Now I can fancy some of my readers exclaiming at this point: "Oh, my goodness, the fellow's going to tell us a story about the Matabele war, of which we are tired to death already," and will forthwith replace the paper on the shelf or throw it on the fire, or at any rate, read no more of it, which—I hasten to assure them—would be a very great mistake on their part as well as an immense pity; for the present scribe has no such intention; the Matabele war shall be left severely alone, or only most cursorily touched upon as affording a hero for my tale, which shall be presently removed out of Africa altogether, and shall treat of matters entirely different, and far more original, than a mere native war.

Therefore, read on, suspicious one, and you shall see that you have done wisely and well.

There was one of my fellow-troopers who seemed to afford considerable amusement to many of the others, though for my part I felt the greatest interest in him and became, as the campaign went on, considerably attached to him, and with some reason, as I shall presently show.

This was an elderly man of some fifty-seven years—a storm-beaten, battered, wiry, grim-looking old fellow, who had a habit of talking to himself, or mumbling, as he rode along, which habit gained for him the nickname of "Mumbling Joe," and was the cause of much amusement to his fellows. He was a restless, uncanny person, old Joe, and his behaviour when asleep was astonishing and somewhat agitating for such as are startled by the peculiar conduct of restless sleepers, for he would talk loudly, suddenly shout or shriek, start up to his feet or into a sitting posture, and always, without exception (as I, being his chum and sleeping nearest to him was in a position to observe), the first unconscious movement of his hands was towards a certain light-brown satchel, like a cartridge case, which he wore day and night on a belt round his waist.

Even in daytime, when surprised by the enemy or by any kind of alarm, old Joe's first involuntary movement was to this satchel, which his fingers would first touch before proceeding to grip rifle or revolver, as the case might be.

Others, as well as I, noticed this peculiarity, and loved to chaffingly inquire of the old fellow what the case contained, and whether it was "'Arriet's letters," and so on; but when I saw that this kind of banter and curiosity disturbed him I never shared in such inquisitions, and I think it was this merciful consideration for his feelings that in the first instance endeared me to old Joe. He proved himself one of the best and bravest troopers in the force presently, a splendid and indomitable fighter, and a man of quite marvellous endurance and physical strength and activity.

He was, moreover, undoubtedly the finest shot with rifle or revolver that I ever met. His revolver was a clumsy-looking thing of ancient make and enormous bore, firing a bullet of huge size, and having but four chambers. He had picked it up, he informed me, years ago, and it shot splendidly.

Since those days it has become my own property, and it is at this moment one of my most valued possessions. How it became mine I am now about to describe, though I ought to mention that in this very Matabele campaign and before

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—well, before the revolver changed hands, old Joe Wright twice saved my life by its means, shooting a Matabele at close quarters in each instance when in the very act of assagaiing myself, I being at the time otherwise engaged.

Late one afternoon Joe and I with ten others went out on patrol duty. We were ten miles from camp, and had just sighted a strong body of the enemy watching us from an adjacent hill, covered with kopjes. This was a portion of the impi of which we were in search, and having sighted them we ought, undoubtedly, to have been content with this and ridden straight away to headquarters with the news. But instead of this, we foolishly approached the kopjes in order to discover, if possible, the strength of the force present.

Unfortunately for us this happened to be a well-armed body, and from behind their cover of rocks the fellows peppered us presently with a volley which we could not return because we could see no one to fire at. Under the circumstances it was wisely decided to retire, for, after all, ten men, however determined, are not a match for an impi of two thousand or more, as this might easily be. So we turned and cantered homewards, pursued by many bullets. No one had been struck, up to this, for the Matabele warrior of that day had not even the vaguest idea as to the handling of firearms, and shot merrily in any and every direction that the bullet elected to take, which was very rarely the right one, and was frequently enough straight into the person of his dearest friend, or others of his acquaintance.

Suddenly, however, old Joe's horse gave a kind of snort, threw up its head, plunged, and fell forwards, pitching its rider into the long grass five yards away, where he lay a moment stunned. The rest, not observing the catastrophe, for we two had been cantering together behind them, loth—I suppose—to leave the field, rode on and were quickly concealed in the bush and cover which each man did his best to place between himself and the enemy.

Well, I really do not mean to boast about it, because any other person would naturally have done no less than I did, but I must tell the story exactly as it happened, and therefore—at the risk of being misunderstood—I have to say in as few words as possible that I waited for Joe, and dismounted, and went over to where he lay in the long grass. He was just recovering, and sat up grabbing his yellow satchel in a comical way.

"What is it—what is it—what's happened?" he muttered.

"Your horse had been shot, and it grassed you in falling; get on mine with me, quick," I said, "no time for talking; if those beggars saw you fall they'll be after us directly—can you stand?"

Old Joe's eyes glanced gratefully into mine for an instant, but he only said:

"Rather!" and sprang to his feet. We scrambled upon my beast as quickly as we could, and looked back.

Sure enough, half-a-dozen of the dusky rascals were after us already, and set up a frantic shout when they saw us mounted together upon one steed; the foremost of them were but thirty or forty yards away, and a flight of assagais whistling about our ears soon proved to us that we had better get out of range as quickly as possible.

I was actually making a remark to this effect to my comrade when I felt him start, and heard him utter an exclamation. Joe was riding behind me, and he clung round my waist with his arms.

"What's up, old man?" I said "don't tell me they've struck you?"

"They have though," he gasped; "whip up the horse and get under cover, the infernal black rascals have done for me, I think!"

CHAPTER II.

The Death of Joe Wright.

I was all for stopping a moment in order to attend to my stricken companion, but Joe would not hear of it, and bade me ride, for Heaven's sake, for all the horse was worth. He had much on his mind to speak of, he said, before he died, and we must get out of reach of these rascals so that he might make me his confessor at leisure.

"Nonsense, man, don't talk of dying!" I said bracingly, "you'll be all right when we get to camp; doctor'll soon make you comfortable!"

I looked round at him.

"No, there's no nonsense about it," he said, "ride on, old man, I'm cooked this time; but I've broken off the shaft of the blamed thing, and the rest may stop in as a kind of cork till I'm ready to go."

I looked round at him, and saw that poor old Joe was really badly hit; the head of the spear that struck him was still sticking deeply in his side, his kharki jacket being stained deep red in a circle round it. He had broken off the shaft, as he said, and the operation must have given him a nasty twinge. I made no further remark, but quickened my old horse up—he was a wretched old screw, but he served us well that day—and presently we were out of sight of our yelling pursuers, concealed by the thick bush and by the hilly and rocky nature of the ground. Joe leant rather heavily upon me as we galloped along, and I looked round once or twice in some anxiety, fearing that he had collapsed; but each time he bade me ride on a bit further, saying that he would be all right, only that the motion of the horse was rather painful.

"Ride about three miles or so," he said, "that'll be enough for the present."

I did so, and pulled up eventually at the foot of a large kopje, by climbing which I could at any time obtain a fine

view of the surrounding country in case the enemy were still after us, which was not likely.

Then I helped old Joe to dismount. As a matter of fact, I lifted him from his seat and laid him down as gently as might be, for he was as weak as a kitten.

"Ah!" he sighed, "that's better. Now I'm good for half-an-hour or so, I fancy, but it may be less, so we'll begin business. Now you listen well, sonny, for what I have to say is worth hearing. I am dying here without a relative in the world that I care to remember or acknowledge, and without a friend—which is far worse!"

"Come, come, Joe Wright," I said, "I can answer for one, anyway!"

"Well, you're the pick of the bunch, certainly, and that's a piece of luck for you," said the wounded man, gasping as

"You villain, Jake."

he spoke and looking very white. "Lord, how painful this hole this! I'm pleased that it's you beside me now, and not one of those inquisitive young devils up at camp; you've been good to me, I allow, and not too curious about what doesn't concern you, and I'm a-going to reward you for it. You see this satchel—well, you may have noticed that I am in the habit of taking rather particular care of it—well now, this satchel contains a secret that's worth a king's ransom, for anyone who's cute enough to read it. See here—no, I can't move without getting a devilish twinge in the side—open it for me, it's only strapped and buckled—now draw out that thing inside."

I drew out a kind of roll of paper, there was nothing else in the satchel. Outside the roll were a number of figures in rows; the roll itself consisted of sheets of paper sown together, and closely written.

"Open it out," said Joe; "can you read the writing?"

I read out the words that headed the first page in proof of my ability to decipher them; they were somewhat peculiar:

"The diary of Joseph Wright's adventures, discoveries, claims, crimes, and cowardice. Cursed be he who meddles with that which is not his."

"That's it, that's it," he said approvingly; "you're all right, I see. Roll it up again and listen; don't lose the last page or damp it, for a lot depends upon it. Now, do you know what a cryptogram is?"

I said I thought I did. I had, as a matter of fact, been somewhat interested in the foolish discussions in which it had been lately asserted that Shakespeare was Bacon, or *vice versâ*, and that this was proved by a cryptographic confession buried in the plays themselves, and to be read by those who desired to be taught to do so by some ingenious American individual, whose name had escaped me.

"Well, these papers contain my confessions," continued Joe, speaking faintly; "read 'em when I'm dead, but not before, and, remember, that there's a cryptogram in them, and that the key to it is those figures on the last page. When you've read it you'll know what to do. I didn't dare, for reasons that you'll understand; but it's different for you. You can take a partner, if you'd rather. Lord, how this infernal thing hurts—what was I saying?—I'm a murderer, sonny, or next door to it, and a thief besides, as you'll see when you've read all; can you shake hands with me, knowing this, before I die? I have an idea God'll be kinder to me, like, if He sees that an honest young chap like you didn't mind giving his hand to a stained old sinner like me?"

I gave the old fellow a grip, but said nothing, for, as a matter of fact, it made me feel a little chokey to hear him talk in this way.

"Thanks, thanks, sonny," he gasped, for I suppose my hand-shake gave him a twinge. "Lord, forgive me, what devils greed makes of us! I wasn't so bad at your age, nor for many a year after, but—Lord! that stone—they called it 'The Eye of the Sun'—and some 'The Glory of Rajpore'; a man sells his soul for a gem like that, sonny, he does, indeed! And that's what I've done, and gained nothing by it in the end! Lord, what poor fools we men are!"

Not being able to understand what the old fellow was driving at, I said nothing, and presently he began to wander, and then to rave; at last he suddenly tried to stand up, and the exertion caused a rush of blood; he staggered, and fell against me; at the same moment he fixed his wild eyes on my face.

"You villain, Jake; you spying, murderous, infernal rascal!" he gasped in his madness, trying to grab his revolver; "you——"

He got no further, for blood flowed from his mouth and stopped his speech; I laid him down, raising his head, and speaking encouraging words to him, but he did not rally, and died in my arms almost immediately. It was a sad and miserable ending to a life, and the sight of it made me feel very low in spirits. Presently, when I felt quite certain that he was dead, and had not only swooned, I emptied the poor fellow's pockets—finding a sum of money which surprised me by its largeness—and buried him, repeating what I could remember of the burial service over his remains, and so left him and returned to camp to report myself.

Our commandant bade me keep the money, which amounted to over fifty pounds, saying that I was at least as well entitled to it as anyone else, but expressed some curiosity to know the contents of Wright's notorious yellow satchel.

"Only the story of the poor old fellow's life and adventures," I explained.

"Oh, come," said the captain, "he wouldn't have been so ridiculously anxious about the welfare of his diary; there must be something else."

"There is not, really!" I said—"it is simply his 'confessions,' as he called them; and he has left them to me as a special legacy, marked 'private.'"

"Well, then, I wish you joy of your inheritance," said the skipper laughing; "for the fellow was evidently as

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mad as they make them, and there'll be some entertaining reading!" and so the matter remained in so far as it concerned him and the rest of our troop, namely, that old Joe had been as mad as could be, and had left me a bundle of yarns as a particular and precious legacy, as well as a little present of fifty odd pounds and an old revolver as a kind of make-up for the trouble of reading his precious diary.

This latter document was easy enough to read, for it was written in a clear, bold hand and in a business-like style, lacking, indeed, both romantic grace and classic elegance, but generally correct from a grammatical point of view, and correctly spelt for the most part, though homely enough in its expressions.

Now, as Joe Wright's tale is my own, or a necessary prelude to my own, I shall ask my readers to allow me to transcribe his diary or narrative into this story of mine, his experiences to form, as it were, the first act, and my own the second.

I must confess that I quite shared the opinion of the rest as to Joe's sanity, and that I began the reading of his confessions without any great amount of interest; I was not sanguine, I expected neither much amusement nor any profit in the poor old adventurer's secrets. What could he have to reveal that might benefit me? Still, I would read the rigmarole for the sake of the dead and buried human failure, who had expressed a special wish that I should do so, and I may say at once that the reading of the score or two of sheets intensely interested and engrossed me, and that by the time I was through with my literary enterprise, I was anxious enough to set to work to discover the secret buried by the narrator in the form of a cryptogram; indeed, if my readers become half as interested in the matter as I was, they will thank me for providing them with so appetising a morsel. I read the sheets whenever I had an opportunity to do so unobserved by my comrades, whose remarks, when they saw me so employed, were unflattering to old Joe Wright's sanity, and to my own for wasting my time in reading his trash.

Nevertheless, I soon came to the conclusion that, whatever Joe may have been, he was as sane as any of his critics, as well as one of the smartest and most wide-awake individuals I had yet come across, though apparently not overburdened with that serious impediment to success in this naughty world—namely, a conscience.

Here is the tale, word for word as Joe Wright penned it.

CHAPTER III.

THE VISIT TO THE TEMPLE.

I AM a gentleman by birth, began Joe Wright's narrative, but one way or another I drifted down stream and was forced, in the end, to take the Queen's shilling, enlisting in a Royal Rifle regiment quartered at the Curragh. My first ten or twelve years of service were not very eventful, and I got on fairly well, and should have done far better, but for an unfortunate infirmity in my nature, which impelled me at regular or irregular intervals to embark in some wild and foolish enterprise—to "run amock," in fact, in a mild way—and, as a necessary consequence, to get into trouble. Many and many a time during the long years of my service did I sacrifice my chances of promotion and advancement to this foolish tendency to periodical wildness.

The officers—those who took an interest in me—lectured me often enough, pointing out that I might and ought to do exceedingly well if I liked; even the colonel spoke to me very seriously, more than once; but neither he nor they produced more than a skin-deep repentance in me—for though I desired to get on and often determined to do so, yet the longing to play the devil would come upon me and lose me stripes and prospects time after time, and the wonder is—not that I remained a private—but that I was permitted to remain in the regiment at all! However, I was not dismissed, and eventually we found ourselves in India, where we were quartered first at Bangalore, and, for the last year or so of our stay, at Rajpore.

Enlisting in a Royal Rifle regiment.

It was here that the talk went one evening in the mess-room about a great Hindoo idol in a temple near at hand, situated in a grove of great trees, four miles or so from our quarters.

Someone told us that this idol had a diamond in his forehead which was the sixth biggest in the world.

"Lord!" exclaimed Johnny Phelps, one of my favourite companions, as wild as anyone when a lead was given him, but otherwise a thoroughly good fellow and everybody's friend. "Lord! I'd like to have a look at that!"

"Anyone can see it," said our informant. "I saw it with these eyes, as big as a plover's egg, s'elp me it is, and no one about to look after it but a priest or two."

"Then why don't someone knock the Jossers on the head and help himself?" asked a man called Jake Daws, of whom I shall have more to say—an unpopular and disagreeable fellow, given to fierce threats and low language, who professed to hate the service and all in authority, and to be the enemy, as he would boast, of God and man, his only true friend being Jake Daws.

"Well, that idol ain't such a fool as he looks," said the first speaker—I think it was Miles, but I don't remember for certain, and it doesn't matter much. "He can protect himself, can that idol, so I'm told, and even if you was to knock the Jossers on the head you wouldn't get the diamond."

"Why not, what can the blooming thing do to you?" asked someone.

"That's what I don't rightly know myself," said Miles; "but I'm told it ain't safe to go picking about for that there diamond. You can go and try for yourself if you want to know particulars!"

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"Some blooming pistol that gives you one in the chops soon as you touch the jewel!" suggested another speaker; "no jewels for me, thank'ee, I ain't taking any to-day! I've heard of an idol as played those games!"

Everybody laughed, and the subject got itself changed and probably forgotten by most of us; but later on in the evening a few of us got together and reopened the subject, and as this is the real beginning of my tale, I give their names; there was myself, known as Joe Wright, though this is not my real name; Alfred Hitchins, a bit of a bad lot; Johnny Phelps—good old Johnny, whom I liked well enough; and lastly, Jake Daws.

I suppose the time had come round for one of my fits of wildness, for I felt reckless and desperately inclined that night for something to give one a flutter, and I started the subject of the idol and the big diamond, more—I vow and declare—in the hope of having some kind of a lark than with any ambition to possess myself of the famous jewel, which at this time I did not covet in the slightest degree, never having seen it or experienced the extraordinary fascination which the sight of it exercised upon me and others afterwards.

"Well," I said, "which of you Johnnies is on for a bit of fun to-night?"

"I am," said Phelps, who was always open to enterprise, and the first to come forward at the suggestion of anything racy.

"What kind of a spree?" asked Hitchins.

"Why, the idol," said I, "and the diamond."

"What, to-night?" exclaimed Jake.

"To-night," I echoed.

There was silence for about half a minute. Then Johnny spoke.

"All right!" he said, "I'm on, for one!"

"Oh, I'll come," added Hitchins, "but I don't believe there's anything in it!"

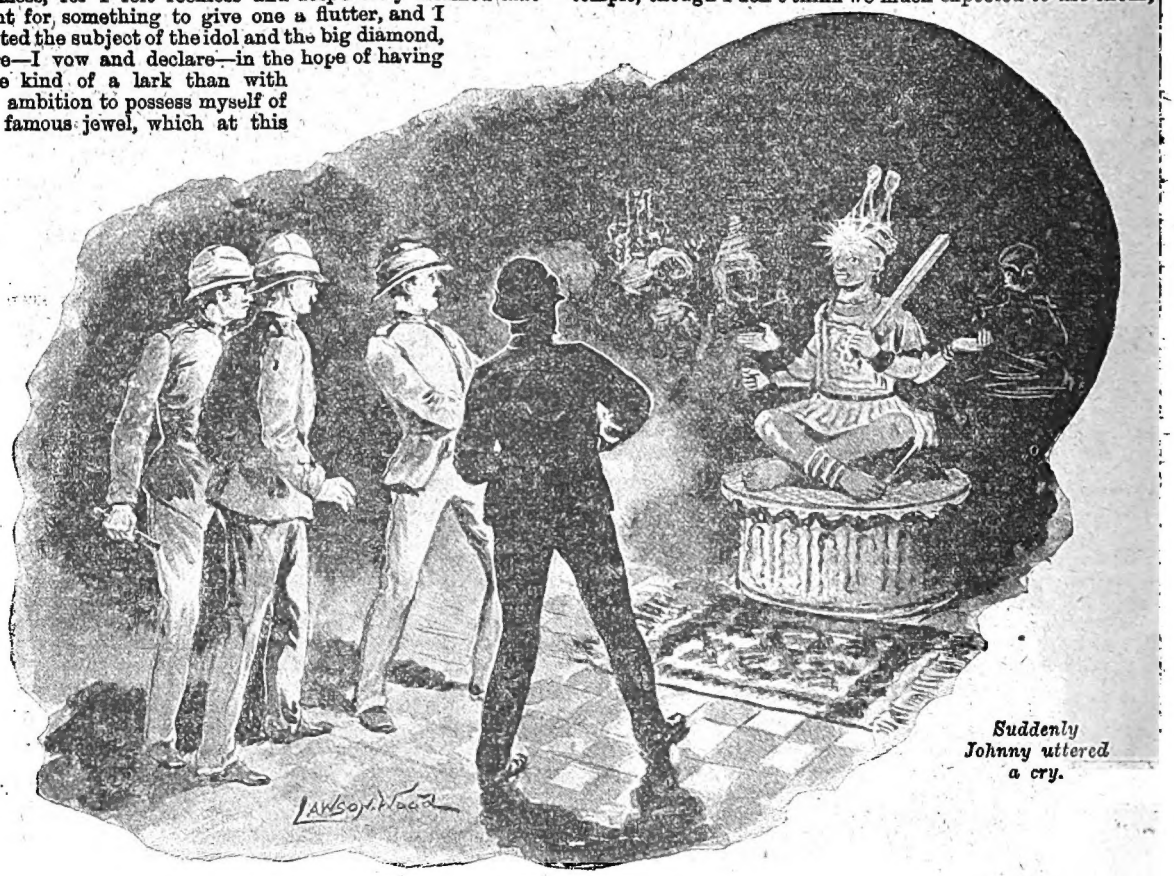
"There's a bit of a spree, anyway," I said; "it can't hurt us to go and have a look round; what say you, Jake?"

"Oh, I'm on," said Jake, laughing; "there'll be nothing in it, though, as Hitchins says. I'm not going to knock those Jossers you talked of on the head or get dabbed in the eye by the idol either. It ain't good enough; but I'll come and have a look round."

Then we all four set to and arranged matters, and I don't suppose four other men breathed who knew more about getting out of quarters at night without being asked awkward questions than we four did.

We had a couple of lanterns and a chisel or two, just in case there was anything to be done when we got to the temple, though I don't think we much expected to use them, and we mustered at a spot we all knew of not very far from barracks somewhere between midnight and one o'clock in the morning. The temple lay in a grove of trees about five miles away, and we had no difficulty in finding it, knowing its whereabouts from Miles; the place was locked, however, and we were obliged to make an entrance the best way we could, which was by forcing a window. We all dropped into the great, dark place, one after the other, and I confess I shouldn't have cared to do it all alone, for it was one of the creepiest things I ever experienced, to grope about there among a lot of heathen gods and idols that might be endowed, for all I knew, with all manner of mechanical dodges for stabbing or shooting trespassers as they impiously trod the sacred soil of this their sanctuary and dwelling place.

We stopped and listened when all were safely in, in case we should hear anyone moving, but there was not a sound to be heard, and we soon decided, to our relief, that the



Suddenly Johnny uttered a cry.

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priests had deserted their charge and gone home to bed, which was just as well for them; for, though I should have voted myself against bloodshed, and so I know would Johnny, yet I was not so sure about Hitchins and Jake Daws, and the Jossers, as they called them, would probably have been knocked on the head if they had appeared and interfered with us in any way.

Then we lit up our lanterns and looked about us.

"Lord, what an army of Josses!" exclaimed Johnny under his breath. "Which is the old boy with the big jewel, I wonder!"

There were scores of idols of every shape and size, mostly sitting with their legs crossed in impossible attitudes, and wearing upon their faces leers of more or less diabolical malignity or of complacent inanity, and we wandered among them for a while without finding the object of our search.

Suddenly Johnny uttered a cry. The light of the lantern which he carried rested at the moment upon a large idol seated upon a kind of pedestal, cross-legged, its face wore—unlike the rest—an expression of great benevolence, which was slightly marred by a kind of ironical smile which seemed to hover about the mouth.

From its forehead, which was about five feet from the ground, there flashed a something responding with dazzling splendour to the rays which Johnny's lantern shed upon it, that arrested our steps at once and caused each to utter an exclamation, like Johnny himself, of surprise and delight.

"Lord, only look at it!" cried Jake aloud, forgetting himself in his excitement. "That's a gem a man might sell his soul for." His voice sounded strange and crude in this silent place.

"Great Cæsar!" said Johnny. "We must have that out, boys, if it's only to play with a bit and put it back afterwards—just to say we've fingered it! What d'you say?"

"I say, if we get it out we'll stick to it!" said Hitchins with an oath, which somehow sounded doubly sacrilegious here.

"We should be all right!" said Jake. "Each of us has an *alibi*. We've never left the barracks, we haven't!"

As for me, I was not a thief, with all my faults—that is I had never been one up to this night, but the sight of that gem as we gazed deliberately at it under the concentrated light of the two lanterns fascinated me, and seemed to scorch all right-feeling out of my soul; my compunctions withered, and died in the dazzle of the huge diamond, and I felt that I must have a hand in any enterprise that was started with it for an object.

Hitchins and Jake Daws were whispering confidentially together.

"Look here, boys," said Jake presently, "Alf Hitchins and I have decided that we are on for this yer diamond; either or both of you fellows can go partners if you choose—if not, you've got to swear Bible oaths that you don't give anything away, and then you can get home when you like."

"All right, I'm on!" I said, and Johnny, with a laugh, said he'd have a hand in it, too, though burglary wasn't, so to speak, much in his line.

"Burglary!" repeated Jake angrily, "don't talk Tommy-rot; why, who should we be robbing? Nobody but this Joss-house mummy here, and a fat lot it'll hurt *him!* There's no burglary about it, we're saving a magnificent gem from utter waste; better some Christian dook or prince should enjoy it and pay us well for it, than keep it stuck in a blooming image's forehead which doesn't even know it's there. Come now, who's going to pick for it? Who volunteers first to go at it? Profits divided, of course!"

"We 'll draw lots, I say!" said Hitchins, and we did so, and the job fell to Johnny.

(To be continued.)

Important to Our Readers.

Mr. H. G. WELLS' story, "The War of the Worlds," at present running through the pages of "Pearson's Magazine," bids fair to become not only the greatest work he has yet produced, but the most popular piece of fiction of the year. Our readers will, therefore, be glad to know that we have secured his next story, and that the opening chapters of it will appear in the

BANK HOLIDAY NUMBER of PEARSON'S WEEKLY,

On Sale Friday, June 4th.

It will be entitled

"The Invisible Man."

Other writers have treated this theme, but they have generally given the invisible man a power which it was something more than a satisfaction for him to have. Mr. Wells, however, is original in all things, and shows us in this story what a disadvantage it is to become invisible. He describes how, if a man becomes invisible, it does not follow that his clothes become invisible also, and on this supposition has woven a story that will hold the reader with breathless interest from start to finish.

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The Flask and the Clock.

It was generally conceded that Herr Professor Max Hofmeyer was a very queer man, almost as queer, in fact, as the little clock that hung on the wall of his laboratory.

And, to tell the truth, it was with respect to his same tiny timepiece that Hofmeyer had first manifested his queerness. In as much as the clock was a gift from a Swiss watchmaker whose life he had once saved, and was in itself quite a curiosity—consisting of a silver ball about an inch in diameter, flattened on one side to make room for the diminutive dial with its golden hands, the whole to be hung up by means of a ring curiously fastened into the top of the glittering sphere—Hofmeyer persisted in using it in his laboratory, where the most accurate of chronometers would have been much more in place. When his friends ridiculed, and warned him he would be sorry some day for his obstinacy, he was wont to mutter something about "his clock," "his laboratory," and "his risk."

Of course, people did not think him any the less queer for refusing to take their advice.

But what was more intolerable to his brother professors, he had some startlingly unconventional ideas on the subject of hypnotism. He studied its phenomena deeply, but in his own way and according to his own theory, and thus, to every other scientist, who believed himself to have the one correct way and the one infallible theory, he seemed very queer indeed. He held that hypnotism ought to be studied from the subject's point of view as well as from the operator's, that an accurate record of what a man felt as he passed into and emerged from the hypnotic state, was quite as valuable as the record of what he did while in that state.

When a hypnotist desired to make an experiment, Hofmeyer was ready to offer himself for a subject, and after waking from the somnambulistic state which each recurrence of the experience rendered more easy of induction, he would jot down in a note book whatever flitting recollections he might have of his sensations during the transitional moments between sleeping and waking.

While his activities and interests were for the most part focussed upon the study of hypnotism, he had lesser hobbies whereon in moments of leisure he occasionally took a canter, chief among which might be mentioned an Edison's phonograph. This ingenious mechanism possessed for him all the charm of a plaything. To set it going from any part of the room where he might happen to be, he had deftly connected it with an electric key; and more than once a somewhat long-winded and long-staying caller had been startled by suddenly hearing behind him a metallic yet perfectly audible voice informing him that his carriage was at the door and the coachman tired of waiting.

But the talking machine performed also a more practical service. Like many a scientific genius, Hofmeyer was exceedingly absent-minded, and often loitered in his laboratory puzzling over some refractory experiment long after it was time for him to take his daily exercise, which consisted of an hour's walk along the boulevard.

To render such lapses impossible, he contrived so that whenever he began an experiment that was likely to take considerable time for its satisfactory completion, he could, by a simple clockwork attachment, "load," as it were, his phonograph, and at the desired moment it would "go off," reminding him that his recreation hour had arrived. "Ah!" Hofmeyer used to say, "these great inventions must be applied to everyday life before you can appreciate them."

It once happened that his friend and junior professor, Baumline, was in the laboratory when the phonograph rolled off its monotonous admonitary announcement.

"Fairly good imitation of the human voice that, isn't it?"

"Yes, but not to be compared with what we'll have in a half decade," Hofmeyer replied. "We've scarcely graduated from the kindergarten of invention yet."

"I don't know about that," objected Baumline. "It is useless to hope that we can ever reproduce exactly the sounds of human articulation. There is that mysterious something, that indefinable fibre to a real voice which reveals and proves the mind behind the utterance; and until we can endow a machine with the power of thought we can never expect it to reproduce with any approximate perfection, the voice of a thinking being."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Hofmeyer, and there ensued forthwith one of those fierce and learned discussions that were not at all infrequent between him and his young friend. They argued for more than an hour, the professor claiming for the American's invention an all-successful future, Baumline maintaining, on the contrary, that in its attempts to give an exact reproduction of the human voice, if in no other respect, it was doomed to certain failure.

"But you will admit this much, at any rate, won't you?" Hofmeyer asked at length, "that if all imitations of the human voice are in some essential, but, we confess,

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indefinable way unnatural, the fact would be most surely detected in the state of exalted sensibility to external impressions that characterises the condition of the hypnotised subject?"

After a moment's thought Baumline nodded his head in the affirmative.

"You must also grant," the professor continued, "that a subject who has always received his suggestion from a human voice would not respond to any reproduction of that voice unless it were enough like the original to deceive his sense of hearing, even in its exaggerated acutenes; and if now, in the very infancy of invention a copy can be made so natural as to elicit his response, we have every reason to expect that in future years the means of imitation may be so perfected that the reproduction can be exact in every particular?"

Baumline again nodded his assent.

"Well, then," Hofmeyer went on, "you come to my laboratory next Saturday at three o'clock, and in one hour's time, from these concessions of yours, I'll prove my position by scientific test to be inexpugnable."

For a moment the younger man hesitated, but finally acquiesced and declared his intention to be present "with a vengeance" at the time specified.

All the following day Professor Hofmeyer was afflicted with cold feet, or in other words, did some hard thinking. Towards the end of the afternoon he seemed to come to a satisfactory conclusion, for with a smile that might have been prophetically triumphant, he entered his laboratory, and to prevent interruption of any sort carefully locked the door behind him. He then fitted to his phonograph an unused wax cylinder and attached the large, bell-shaped receiver, after which preparations he pressed the key and began to slowly enunciate into the instrument:

"Friends and fellow professors, you have been invited here this afternoon to investigate with us whether an exact reproduction of the human voice by mechanical means is within the range of possibility. It is charged that I, a mindless, soulless thing of steel and wax, am incapable of copying with any reasonable fidelity the utterance of the mind-endowed and soul-endowed thing of flesh and bone, man. In contradiction I am to demonstrate that so essentially faithful and natural is my reproduction of the sounds of human speech, that even to the abnormally acute senses of the hypnotised subject, my words come with all the compelling power of the original utterance.

"The man whom you see Professor Hofmeyer now leading into the room is Max Nutberger, a youth that has been hypnotised within the last few moments by the ordinary method of the revolving mirror. Upon this young man I will now proceed to experiment.

"Max, you are fast, fast asleep, utterly overcome with weariness. Your muscles are all tired out. Why, Max, you can't raise your foot from the floor! No, not if you put forth all your strength, I told you you couldn't. But wait a minute—just one moment—and the result will be different. Now you have no trouble in lifting your foot, have you? Of course you haven't. I'll tell you a secret, Max; I had an immense magnet under the floor a moment ago and it attracted the nails of your boots so that you couldn't pull them away."

It is unnecessary to rehearse all the words Professor Hofmeyer intoned so deliberately into that gaping receiver; but after suggesting several of the more common hypnotic tests he continued:

"Friends, you see I have clearly proved my control over Max's muscles; I will now by a single experiment demonstrate my equal power over his sensations. Max, you see that flask upon the bench? That is filled with some of the finest wine that has ever passed through the custom house of Weinfurt. Drink it and tell me if it isn't fit to put before the Kaiser! See, friends, he smacks his lips, and I can assure you the very nectar of the gods could not have been sweeter to him than was that common water. But, Max, Max, you've slept long enough. When I count three you must wake up. One, two, remember, you must wake up—three, awake!"

The professor paused a few minutes before resuming:

"My dear friends, our experiment, you will agree, has been crowned with unusual success. My word was as law to this man, and had I ordered him to kill himself he would have obeyed as unhesitatingly as a child. Further words are unnecessary; I trust my demonstration has been convincing."

After Hofmeyer had completed his dictation, he listened carefully while the phonograph reproduced his speech. Not a word was wrong, not a pronunciation indistinct; and as he left his laboratory for his afternoon stroll his face was wreathed in a smile that betokened unmistakable satisfaction.

During the days that intervened before the decisive Saturday, Hofmeyer was subjected alternately to chills of fear and fevers of hope. Suppose Baumline were right after all, and his words when repeated by the phonograph should lack the strength and power that demanded obedience. It would be disgraceful, he thought. And with a score of invited guests to witness his humiliation! Perhaps he ought to have made the trial a little more private. But on the other hand there was no reason why he should fail.

The reproduced words were perfectly audible, and it was ideas, he assured himself, and not mere sound vibrations that were to govern the subject's action. And if he succeeded, how gloriously triumphant it would be to have every word in the whole course of the experiment spoken by the phonograph—a machine appearing in its own defence, and pleading for man's favour in the very words of men! The *Zeitung* would devote a leader to commenting on his success and everybody in the street would be talking about Hofmeyer! Ah, but any beggar he met that night would fare well.

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The Saturday came at length, and so nervous was the professor through the early morning, that he concluded about eleven o'clock that unless he occupied his mind for the next few hours with something besides the approaching experiment, the fatal time would find him in no condition to perform the duties of direction and supervision. He bethought himself of a difficult problem in chemistry that had perplexed him up to the day of his discussion with Baumline, but upon which, since that time, he had bestowed scarcely any attention.

"The very thing," he said half aloud. "It's abstruse and it's long, and perhaps it's very intricacy will serve to draw my mind away from this accursed test." And so after a light lunch, about noon, he went into his laboratory, took down his flask of prussic acid and the other chemicals involved in the problem, and began his mixing and compounding.

At first his mind wandered, and persisted in taking note of every detail under the sun that had nothing whatever to do with the experiment. His last lot of tubes didn't seem to be nearly so brittle as those of previous lots; and what a funny odour that prussic acid had, just like peach-blossom! But as the desired reactions obstinately refused to come, Hofmeyer gradually forgot Baumline and hypnotism and peach odour and everything else, save his one stubborn problem. At the very moment, though, when he seemed most absorbed, that inexplicable attraction that ever exists between extremes brought him back with a jerk to the subject which after all was deepest in his thought.

It flashed upon him that he had told Baumline he could convince him in an hour's time—what if his phonograph speech required more than sixty minutes for its delivery? Baumline might claim on this technicality that the experiment had failed. Upon glancing at his bullet-shaped clock, Hofmeyer saw that it was ten minutes to two. There was plenty of time yet to ascertain whether his experiment would come within the promised limits, and so he determined that just as the hands indicated the even hour he would start the phonograph and measure the length of its speech.

With this purpose, he seated himself before his bench with his finger lightly touching the key that was to set the talking cylinder in motion, his eyes glued upon the clock as it hung on the wall, a few feet above the level of his head. Eight minutes to two! These chemicals, he thought, and especially that flask of prussic acid, didn't look very nice on his bench, to be sure; but then, after he had started his machine talking there would be plenty of time to straighten up his laboratory before his company arrived. Five minutes to two! Just then the sun in his downward course shone in through the window and transformed the silver clock into a gleaming fire ball. How it flashed and burned! Only three minutes!

Hofmeyer was staring at the blazing timepiece as though fascinated, his pupils dilated, his body bent forward in the eagerness of his gaze. Two o'clock! Two minutes past! And yet no motion from the professor. Apparently he had forgotten the very purpose for which he was watching the clock. Three minutes past! His eyelids fluttered and drooped, an almost imperceptible shudder ran through his frame—sufficient, however, to complete the circuit in the electric key—and Professor Hofmeyer was asleep, with the prussic acid still rebukingly before him, and visitors expected in less than an hour! Hark, from across the room sounded a low humming noise, that soon took the form of distinct words:

"Friends and fellow professors, you have been invited here this afternoon to investigate with us whether an exact reproduction of the human voice by mechanical means is within the range of possibility."

* * * * *

About a quarter to three, Baumline knocked gently for admittance at the door of Professor Hofmeyer's laboratory, but received no response. Placing his ear to the keyhole to learn whether Hofmeyer was inside, he heard with great distinctness these words:

"Max, you see that flask upon the bench? That is filled with some of the finest wine that has ever passed through the custom house of Weinfurt. Drink it and tell me if it isn't fit to be put before the Kaiser."

"This is pretty evesdropping business for me to be in, isn't it?" Baumline suddenly asked himself, and began pacing the hall. But curiosity was strong. Again he stopped at the door and listened.

"When I count three you must wake up. One, two—remember you must wake up—three, awake!"

"What nonsense is this he's trying on his phonograph now, I wonder," thought Baumline, but again a reproving conscience dragged him from the key-hole and made him walk the hall. He had hardly taken a step when a piercing scream rung from the laboratory. He rushed to the door and attempted to open it. It was locked!

"It's Baumline, let me in!" he shouted, but no reply.

"Do you hear? It's I, Baumline. The door is locked."

The only answer was a groan, "Oh, my God!" Almost frenzied, Baumline hurled himself against the door. It yielded a little, but still held. Again and again he dashed against it with all the weight of his athletic frame, until finally it gave way, and he burst into the room. As he entered a faint odour of peach bloom greeted his nostrils, but blinded by the bright sunlight—for the hall had been but dimly illumined—he was unable at first to distinguish anything in the apartment. It was only an instant, however, before his eyes adapted themselves to the increased light, and there before him, sunk down into his chair, was the professor, his eyes fixed and glassy, his limbs flaccid, his utter immobility showing that death had already supervened. On the bench within easy reach was a flask labelled "Prussic Acid," and on the wall, with almost impious energy, ticked that accursed little Swiss clock. At that instant the phonograph resumed its talk:

"My dear friends, our experiment, you will agree, has been crowned with unusual success. My word was as law to this man, and had I ordered him to kill himself he would have obeyed as unhesitatingly as a child. Further words are unnecessary. I trust my demonstration has been convincing." Herbert A. Jump.

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Short Stories

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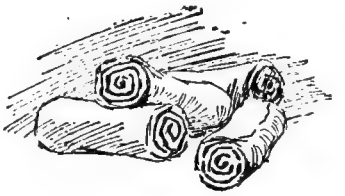

No. 53.....

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No. 58.....

Remember these Things. . .

Young People should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

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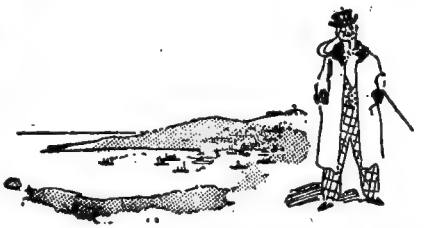

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THE CITY OF ANGELS.

"IT is a pity," I said to the head waiter, "that every hotel in this country does not have a professional host. Now at the Coranado——"

"But, monsieur," he said, with the barest shrug of his shoulders, "if there is anyone that monsieur desires to know——"

He ran his eyes over the room (the rascal was a connoisseur, upon my life) and then he bent rather lower over my chair.

"Mademoiselle is living here," he said. "I will, if you prefer it, put you at the same table to-night. A pretty face, monsieur; a fine figure, too."

"Devilish fine," I thought. But I put on an air of indifference.

"You need not trouble," I said, stroking my moustache and scrutinising the wine-list. "It is nothing to me where I sit."

"Of course not, monsieur."

Long-stemmed roses, delicate, coral-coloured flowers of exquisite perfume decorated the little tables, with their spotless cloths and bright silver. A dish piled with the reddest and largest strawberries I had ever seen stood before me, and this when it wanted but four days to Christmas.

"The City of the Angels," I mused. "Truly the name is well chosen." Los Angeles certainly had its advantages over Piccadilly.

I had spoken, I suppose, aloud, for the head-waiter bent over me again.

"The City of the Queen of Angels, it used to be called, monsieur," he said, and once more looked meaningly across the room.

Over the tops of the flowers a pair of dancing black eyes met mine and instantly dropped again, slowly, irritatingly, finally. I studied the girl's face for a moment. The whiteness of the skin, the soft colouring of the cheeks, the arched eyebrows, had something deliciously old-world about them.

The brown hair was parted in the middle as one may see in the big pictures of the beauties of the eighteenth century, but most of all, it was the sweet laughing mouth which led me to do the rash act which afterwards made Los Angeles a name which goaded me each time I heard it mentioned.

The waiter was away fetching my wine, and I got up and passed close to her table, ostensibly to take a glance at the grand view of hill and mountain which made a charming background to the city. And as I passed I dropped a lady's handkerchief (how it came into my possession I cannot surmise) almost at her feet, but with some skill that I conceived prevented her from noticing the act.

I remained at the window for some time, and then turned leisurely back. The handkerchief was still lying where I had dropped it unobserved. So I picked it up, and, bowing slightly, presented it to the owner of that laughing mouth which had enraptured me.

"I think," I said, "you have dropped your handkerchief."

"Oh, thank you ever so much," said she. And then she looked at it and seemed to have some doubts, and felt in her pocket.

"It is not mine," she said. She glanced round and saw no other lady near. "Well, that's real curious, isn't it?" said she.

"It must be yours," I said emphatically.

"But it isn't. I'm sure it isn't," said she. Her eyes were flashing at mine bewilderingly. "Say, don't you think you have dropped it yourself."

I looked shockingly horrified and a little bit injured.

"It's a lady's handkerchief," I cried. "Surely you don't suppose——"

"Oh, you're English," she said delightedly, cutting my sentence short. "I guessed so, the first minute you came into the room. You can't bluff an American girl like that. I saw you drop it, you know, and if it isn't yours, whose is it?"

I felt foolish, but it was no good looking so.

"I don't know," I said truthfully. "I haven't the least idea."

I shifted the conversation.

"You live in Los Angeles?" I asked.

She nodded her pretty head, still laughing at my dilemma.

"And you?" she queried. "How do you like the Wild West?"

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"To me it has only seemed wild as the primrose is wild," said I.

There was no excuse to stay longer. I bowed amiably, and went back to my wine and dessert. But after dinner that night we found ourselves together in the hall, and for several nights following that. Once when the conversation was reaching rather a critical point, "Georgie" (we had reached that stage some time) was called up on the telephone. The peremptoriness of telephones has always been a source of annoyance to me.

"It's Elalaine Murray," she said (I hadn't the least idea who Elalaine Murray might be), "and she wants me to go up to her place to-night. I told her I was going to bring you with me, and she was delighted. I'll go right now and get ready."

Much would I have preferred to do nothing of the kind. But apparently I had been taken in tow, and the prospect of the drive together was not so bad.

"Elalaine is the prettiest woman in the city," Georgie informed me, her eyes fixed straight in front of her.

"I don't doubt it if our hotel's in the suburbs," said I.

"You spoil yourself by being so ridiculous," said she.

It certainly was ridiculous—but I hadn't seen Elalaine Murray then. Directly that piece of good luck came to me, I shifted the association in my mind with the City of the Queen of Angels from Georgie to Elalaine. It is often like this when you are travelling about and constantly meeting new people. Georgie, however, did not like it.

The three of us played poker that evening at two cents the dozen. I sat opposite to my hostess, and more than once I thought I had four queens in my hand, and when the cards were shown down there were only three. She had beautiful auburn hair and blue eyes; her features were quite straight, and her chin squarely sculptured. It was rather an impassive face, and her laughter lay chiefly in her eyes, but the bare fact of being in the same room with her made you gay.

We played on and on, stopping every now and then to lean back in our chairs and talk. Elalaine (I like to call her by that name best), Elalaine and I were hitting it off admirably, but Georgie seemed rather silent. I believe she did not look in my direction once, but I did not notice.

All too soon the villainous clock on the mantelpiece struck eleven. Georgie glanced at me (it was rather an angry glance, I thought), and rose from her chair.

"We must be going, dear," she said (she was speaking to Elalaine). "It has been *such* a delightful evening."

"Going!" cried Elalaine, with a little ring of consternation. "But I asked you to spend the night. Surely you needn't go?"

It seemed that her husband had gone out to some dance and had proposed sleeping with his friends, and that she did not want to be left alone. Georgie, however, insisted that she could not stay.

"Momma made me promise to be back by eleven," she said. "I guess the elevator will have stopped running already, and I hate climbing up those horrid stairs."

"Then Duncan will have to come home," observed Elalaine. "He won't like it; but if you are sure you mustn't stay, of course——"

I looked at Georgie as much as to say: "Don't be selfish; can't you see what a lot of trouble you are causing." But she only tossed her head. I believe she was doing it on purpose. Elalaine went outside to the telephone and began calling up her husband.

Georgie looked sulky, and said nothing to me. Five hours before, such treatment would have driven me to despair, but under the circumstances, I was indifferent. It has never been my way to have two women in mind at once.

"Well?" I said at last. The silence was a little bit marked. Georgie sat down on the sofa and began pulling on her gloves.

"I think," I said, "you have dropped your handkerchief."

"What do you think of her?" she said suddenly, her eyes on the door. I remembered that she was Georgie's friend, and that she had described her as the prettiest woman in the city.

"She is the most charming woman I have ever met," I cried rapturously. "I cannot thank you enough for bringing me."

"I don't think you have had very much experience with women," said she.

"Very little," I said, because I thought I had had a great deal. "But why?"

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"Because it is not usual, when you are with one girl, to talk about another," said she. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes flashing.

"You asked me," I said stupidly. "She doesn't give you the impression of being afraid to be left alone, does she?" I added. I think I had Elalaine on the brain.

"It seems hard she should have to drag her husband back. He won't like it. 'Pon my word, I think you ought to stop if you can, Georgie."

She tossed her head.

"Really," said she, "a woman of Elalaine Murray's age ought to be able to take care of herself. I prefer to be called Miss Mayland," she added.

"Very well, Miss Mayland," said I, with a mocking bow.

Fortunately, Elalaine came back at that moment.

"I cannot bear to be left alone in this house," she explained, helping Georgie on with her coat and kissing her affectionately. "When the servants have gone to bed one feels so lonely and helpless, and since the rush to the Randsburg mines began the place has been filled with roughs."

"Mr. Murray is coming back?" I asked, holding out my hand.

"Not till three or four, I'm afraid," she said. She looked nervous and a little bit white about the lips. It was on my tongue to suggest that I might stop till his return, but a certain difficulty about the choice of words, and also Georgie's presence prevented me from doing so. But I went rather reluctantly, cursing my want of courage, and when at the garden gate Georgie discovered her muff had been left behind I went back with alacrity, my heart beating a little faster at finding the opportunity had come suddenly again.

I had some hesitation about knocking at the door. Knowing we had gone, and that her husband could not have returned, Elalaine would naturally be terrified.

She threw open the door, however, boldly enough, though her face was deathly white, and I could see she was breathing hard. I went in for a moment, found the muff, shook hands again, and, since Georgie was out of earshot, I said half jocularly:

"I will come back and sit on the doorstep till your husband returns if you like."

"I think we might give you a chair in the hall," said she with a bright flash from her eyes. Now, whether she meant it or not I do not know, but I scrambled Georgie off my hands at the hotel door and took the first car back.

There are people at home who suppose that a Western city is at best a collection of wooden houses on two sides of a sandy trail. But Los Angeles has more electric light than London, and miles of asphalted streets, and shops which neither Paris nor New York could rival. The white posts of the cable-car wires give the streets a gay air, as Cheapside looks when coloured poles have been put up for the decorations on Lord Mayor's day. Late as it was, the sidewalks were still crowded with people, and every seat on the car was filled.

Two people sitting next to me were talking.

"I am sorry for *her*," said one of them. "Everyone likes *her*, but the husband's a devil."

"He's almighty handy with his gun," said the other rather enviously. "I was down there at the bottom of fourth street election time when Jim Blane pulled on him and shot him just beside the eye. He dropped down on his knees like a log and put his hand up to his eye; but he shot Jim through the heart afore he fell back unconscious. If that ain't shootin' I 'llow I don't know what shootin' is." The man laughed appreciatingly. "Dan Murray's not going to be left far behind in this world," he added. "There's his house."

He was right. I swung off the car and made my way to the door. The conversation I had heard deepened my respect for Elalaine, who could be so lady-like and so charming with such a brutal husband. She was surprised to see me, but decidely she was glad I had come, for she had worked herself into a terrible state of nervousness. She pushed a chair nearer the fire, and settled herself on the sofa. Her presence stirred me deliciously.

"Georgie Mayland's a very attractive girl, isn't she?" she said, evidently thinking that she had read something between the lines.

"I should be in love with anyone who was the means of bringing me here," said I.

Her graceful arm was resting on the curve of the sofa, her hand slighty dropped so that it looked like the neck of a swan. Over the top of her hand her eyes were laughing at me.

"I am afraid you think me a terrible coward," she said. "I would dearly like to have a man's courage."

"There is very little that is admirable in courage," said I deprecatingly. "Courage comes of bodily

Began pulling on her gloves.

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We talked on and on.

strength, and strength of good health, and a man with good health is not cursed with nerves. We can hardly be proud of a quality which the brutes in the fields have far better developed than it is with us."

But she shook her head.

"The lower animals don't appreciate fine degrees of danger," said she, "I have seen a dog attack my husband, which no man in his senses would do. It was ignorance, not bravery."

She got up and handed me a little silver box of cigarettes.

We talked on and on about a hundred things, and she drew from me many stories, which I always reluctantly tell, of my adventures in many countries, and chiefly how I had once defended a friend from a mob of two hundred who had come out to lynch him. In spite of the light way in which I naturally referred to such things, I think she was rather impressed with the brave deeds I had done.

Presently we both became hungry, and instituted an excursion to the servants' regions, and in ten minutes time had the little dining-room table spread with sardines and biscuits and whatever else we could find. I was drawing the cork from a bottle, standing just beside her chair, when she looked round at me and laughed.

"Do you know this is highly improper?" she said.

"It can never be improper to do good," said I, "and you are doing me a very great deal."

"I was wondering what Duncan would say if he came in and found us like this," Elalaine responded, pushing her glass a little towards me.

I laughed amusedly.

"What would he?" I asked.

She tilted her chair back the slightest possible bit, still keeping her hand on the glass.

"I don't suppose he would *say* much," she replied. "In fact I'm sure he wouldn't."

"As for what anyone thinks, it really does not matter so much," I observed, pulling at the cork.

"I don't suppose he would think a great deal either," she said. "When a man has lived so long as he has in mining camps and places he is apt to shoot first and leave speaking and thinking till afterwards."

The bottle slipped out of my hands on to the floor. Elalaine looked round in surprise, and I could see she was laughing.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Nothing," I said rather quickly, "I thought I heard someone coming up the steps, that's all."

I mopped my forehead. The room was very hot, and I was perspiring.

"I wish Duncan *would* come," said Elalaine, with a little contraction of her brows. "It would be a lesson to him."

The sound of footsteps must have been imaginary, for no one came. Our supper was most delightful, though the conversation was a little bit frivolous. At three o'clock in the morning one cannot be expected to discuss logic. However, I was rather glad when Elalaine suggested we should move back into the drawing-room. It was more conventional there than sitting *tête-à-tête* over champagne and sandwiches.

She went back to her corner of the couch, and I to my easy chair before the fire.

"Sofas are very comfortable," I said philosophically, selecting another cigarette from the box which still lay within reach. "In my own rooms in London I never use a chair except for meals."

She was laughing at me over her hand again. I had a great mind to stretch out my own and take it.

"You luxurious creature," she said, pointing to where the matches stood on a little table at my elbow. She got up suddenly and sat down again, making more room on the couch. "Look," said she, "you can have that corner if you like."

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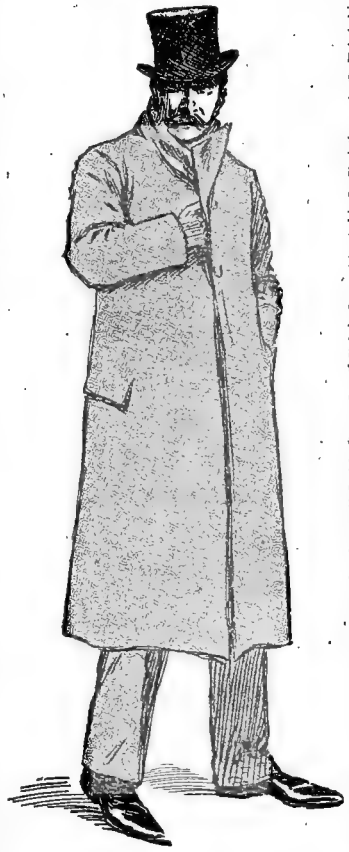
I went and sat down beside her.

We talked of many things, and so pleasantly that I had no idea what the time was, but I knew it must be getting late. Elalaine had suggested that if I felt like a whisky-and-soda I might mix myself one in the dining room, and I was hunting for a syphon when I heard some one coming up the front door steps. There was no illusion this time. I put down my glass and ran into the hall.

"Mrs Murray!" I called breathlessly. I wanted her to explain matters. If her husband were to come in and find me there he might, as she had playfully said, keep his thinking and saying things till afterwards. A couple of words from her would put matters right, but a man coming back to his own house, probably in a bad temper, and finding a stranger drinking his whisky-and-soda at four o'clock in the morning would just as likely as not be unreasonable and violent. It would not occur to him —right out —that I had been introduced by a mutual friend, and had stayed on out of consideration for his wife's nervousness.



The collar of his coat was turned up.

I could hear the latch-key already in the door.

In two strides I was at the drawing-room.

Elalaine was leaning back on the sofa asleep.

"Mrs Murray! Quick. For heaven's sake wake up!" I whispered fiercely.

But she did not stir.

I threw a quick glance over my shoulder. The front door was being slowly opened. A big screen was drawn across part of the hall, hiding the entrance to the servants' quarters, and behind this I darted. It was no good standing there to be shot. I was quite willing to attack burglars, but I had no wish to be mistaken for one. I crouched down instinctively, and partly because my knees were aching. Through a crack in the screen I saw Dan Murray come in like a man whose suspicions had been aroused.

The collar of his coat was turned up and his opera hat was tilted slightly over the right eye. He was a handsome fellow, with a pale complexion, and a heavy moustache, which drooped over the mouth. Somehow I felt relieved that I was not standing there facing him with my explanation, which I realised would sound uncommonly lame. If Elalaine had not been so idiotic as to fall asleep my horrible predicament would never have arisen. As things were, my best plan clearly was to stop where I was until they went up-stairs, and then to let myself out with as little noise as possible.

If ever one man has mesmerised another, I am sure by sheer force of will I preserved Dan Murray from hanging up his coat and hat, and at the same time discovering mine. But when I tried to keep him away from the dining-room where the remains of our meal were spread, I suppose my will-powers were not sufficiently under control. I heard him open the door, which I had taken the precaution to close behind me, and was seriously perturbed lest I should collapse on the spot with terror. My first impulse was to dart out of my hiding-place and forcibly to wake Elalaine up. I was gingerly shifting one lapel of the screen so that I could creep into the room unperceived, when the thought struck me that perhaps even her explanation might not be in time to save me from the attack of that quick-tempered giant. On considering the matter, I determined to stay where I was.

At the same time I made frantic endeavours to wake her up, in order that I might catch her eye and make signs to her to explain my position. But though I could see her when the screen was drawn back, I utterly failed to wake her. It was my fear that, not knowing where I was, she would make some rash remark and not only commit herself but me.

Presently I heard the dining-room door open and close again. Dan Murray had evidently swallowed that pill without a grimace. Or perhaps he had put the second place at the table down to Georgie's account. That, as a possibility that had not occurred to me before, caused me no little relief.

At the same time my mouth felt dry; and the ignominy of my position was particularly galling to anyone with a fine spirit such as I had. Here was I, hiding like a criminal, when my worst offence was that of being indiscreetly considerate for a woman's feelings. A man with sympathies is perpetually a man in difficulty, and the more I thought the matter over in that narrow corner behind the screen the deeper grew my determination to be in future over-selfish rather than too altruistic.

I knew Dan Murray had come out of the dining-room, but he had not gone past my little peephole. After an interval, which seemed to me like hours, however, I heard him coming down the stairs, and the next moment he had crossed over to the drawing-room.

Instinctively I drew the screen round me and stood there listening intently. There was another interval which seemed interminable; my heart throbbed unmercifully, and I was compelled to mop persistently at my forehead. I wondered what Georgie would say and think if she could have seen me at that moment, and I would gladly have given £1,000 to have found myself spirited back to our hotel.

The next thing I remember was hearing a piercing cry, and in an instant, forgetful of everything, I had sprung from my hiding-place, the huge screen falling behind me with a stupendous crash.

Elalaine was on her knees before the couch; her husband was standing over her; it seemed to me with his hand pressed on her throat.

He turned as I came in and loosened his hold. Then, before I had realised his purpose, he sprang at me, hurling me with the force of his blow across the room, and the next moment was out into the hall and had his hand on the front door.

Elalaine, too terrified to speak, was crouching back against the couch wringing her hands.

It seemed to me the verge of a terrible domestic tragedy.

"Look here," I cried, taking two strides in his

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direction; "it is for me to go, not you." I had drawn my revolver, but I flung it from me on to a chair, and stood there with my hands behind me, my lips tightly closed.

He stared at me for a moment with a world of mad hate in his eyes, and then threw open the door and went out.

I heard the sound of a window being thrown up, and as I swung round there came the crack of a revolver. It was Elalaine.

"What have you done?" I cried.

Her hands fell to her side, and she stood staring at me, her head thrown back, revealing the full rounded neck, her eyes blazing, her auburn hair tossed wildly over her forehead.

"You coward," she breathed at last.

I looked at her with amazement, wincing beneath the scorn of her voice. Then I pushed past her and drew the heavy curtains aside, expecting I do not know what awful horror.

"Your husband," I cried, "what has become of him?"

It was perfectly dark outside and quiet as death.

Elalaine glanced up at the clock; her face was ashen.

"I don't know," she said. "He ought to be back by now, and if I were you I should go before he comes." She kicked the revolver which lay smoking on the carpet towards me with the tip of her shoe.

"But——"

She silenced me with an imperious gesture.

"Take my advice," she said, "and go. Dan is a man, and can do things which I can only wish to do. No," she went on, as I tried to interrupt, "I won't listen. You came here on the pretence of affording me protection, and when the need arises what has become of you?" She laughed in a way that cut me to the quick. "Where are you?" she repeated with infinite scorn. "Hiding behind a screen. And there you stop shivering I suppose in your shoes while you allow the house to be burgled—even while I am attacked. A pretty figure forsooth!" and she laughed again.

It had never occurred to me that the man who came in with that deliberate step could be anyone but her husband. I tried to explain, but the words stumbled on my lips.

"Good-night," she said, her hands still behind her.

"Good-bye," said I. And I took down my hat and coat and went outside.

The man she had fired at had evidently not been hit. A woman's best shots come from her mouth.

The next night Georgie came to me after dinner.

"I suppose," she said; "you are going up to the Murrays' to-night."

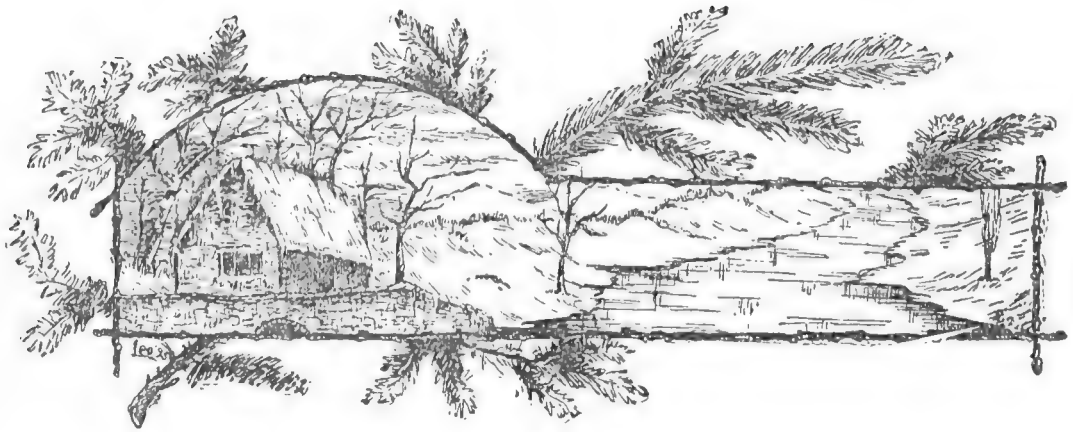
"I would rather stop here," I said truthfully.

I think she was rather pleased at that.

"But Elalaine?" she queried, with her head a little on one side.

"I don't care if I never see her again," said I.

I think I shall marry Georgie if I ever go back to Los Angeles—that beautiful City of the Angels under the bright Californian sky. MERRIDEN HOWARD.



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Another couple of centuries with a few added years have slipped away, and the next scene of the slowly-unfolding drama opens on the sea instead of the land. The Idea which Edward of the Longlegs had so clearly conceived and so very nearly realised, the idea that the frontiers of the United Kingdom of which he had dreamt should be its sea-coasts has all the time been growing and deepening, for, like all ideas which faithfully reflect some fact in the universe, it could not die, and was bound some day to become a fact itself.

Politically, England and Scotland were still independent kingdoms, but many old differences had been forgotten and forgiven, and they had come a great deal closer, as it was fitting that they should do on the eve of their final union. Moreover, they were one in their dread and hatred of that cruel and implacable Colossus which, with one foot on the East and the other on the West, bestrode the world, drawing vast treasures from hidden El-Dorados with which it built countless ships, and hired and armed innumerable men for the enslavement of mankind. For now we have reached those "spacious times of great Elizabeth," when that lusty young giant of Liberty, recently born into the world, was girding on his armour, and making him ready to grapple with the powers of oppression and darkness which were just then most fitly incarnated in the shape of Spain.

It is almost impossible for us of the present day to understand clearly what the Spain of those days was. She was the first naval and military Power of the world, her ships and armies were everywhere, her wealth was honestly believed to be illimitable, and moreover she was the recognised champion of the Catholic Church, whose spiritual thunders mingled with the roar of her guns, and which supplemented the terror of her arms by all the diabolical enginry of torture, and the awful powers of the Holy Office.

The world, in short, was on the eve of great and marvellous doings—on the one hand, so terrible in their deadly earnestness and tremendous consequences, and on the other so fantastically splendid in their almost superhuman daring and undreamt-of rewards, that it looked as though the Fates were preparing some gigantic miracle wherewith to astound mankind. And so, in sober truth, they were, and the miracle about to be wrought was the making of what we now call the British Empire.

In the beginning of the latter half of the sixteenth century there was a yellow-haired, blue-eyed, round-faced and sturdily-built youngster sailing to and fro as ship's boy in a tiny cockle-shell of a craft plying with humbler kinds of merchandise between the Thames and the coasts of France and Flanders. Whether or not he had heard any of those wondrous stories which the western gales were wafting across the Atlantic from the golden Spanish Main we do not know, but probably he had, and, like many another sailor-lad of his day, he had dreamt wild dreams of blue seas and bright skies, of white-walled cities crammed with gold, and of stately galleons staggering across that mysterious sea stuffed to the deck with the treasures they were bringing to pour into the coffers of the King of Spain.

And yet, wild as these dreams may have been, they would have been commonplace in comparison with the bewildering exploits with which this same blue-eyed sailor-lad was one day to realise and excel them. For this was he whose name the mariners of Spain were soon to hear shrieked out by the voice of the tempest, booming in the roar of guns, and echoing through the crash of battle. This, in a word, was Francis Drake—El Draque the Dragon, child and servant of the Devil himself, Scourge of the Church and Plunderer of the Faithful.

As I say, he may or may not have heard the story of the Golden West, but it is quite certain that he did hear much of the black and terrible tale which the refugees and exiles from France and the Netherlands had to tell, for not a few of them crossed over in the little barque in which he served, and he could not fail to hear what they had to say of the murders and massacres, the torturing and outrage with which Spain was disgracing her knightly fame and her ancient faith. They are horrible enough for us to read even here in the security which that gallant struggle won for us, and now when we can only hear the shrieks of the tortured and the groans of the dying echoing faintly across the gulf of three centuries; but what must they have been to Francis Drake, when he heard them told by those whose eyes had only just before looked upon the hideous reality—perhaps indeed by some of those racked and mutilated unfortunates who had managed to escape with their lives to see the sheltering hospitality of Gloriana the Queen? Was it any wonder that deep down in his boyish heart there were planted those seeds of hate and horror which later on were to bear such terrible fruit?

The lad Francis seems to have performed his duties as ship's boy as well as he did everything else, whether it was leading the Queen's ships to harry the coast of Spain or raging and storming through one of his piratical raids among the Fortunate Isles of the West, for when his master died he made him his heir, and so Francis became a trader on his own account. For a few years he was just a peaceful shipmaster, making an honest and hard-won living; but all this time events were

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arranging themselves in more and more martial array, and the bursting of the storm was not very far off.

The actual fighting did not begin in the guise of recognised warfare for a very considerable time. Spain and England were at peace, each trying to humbug the other, but between Protestant and Catholic it was otherwise. Armed cruisers manned by angry Protestants made their appearance in the Narrow Seas, and whenever they got a chance fell upon Catholic ships and avenged the sufferings of their fellow-heretics in a fashion at once prompt and pitiless, and this at length so exasperated Philip that he closed his ports to English trade, and Drake's occupation was gone. Better, in truth, had it been for Philip if he had left him undisturbed in his business!

He sold his little vessel, went to Plymouth, and entered the service of two kinsmen of his, one of whom was soon to prove somewhat of an empire-maker in his own line and whose name, with certain others soon to be mentioned, was destined to go down to everlasting fame indissolubly linked with that of Francis Drake. This was Captain John Hawkins, and when the young trader reached Plymouth he had just come back with a ship-load of gold and other precious things from his first venture in slave-trading, and now at least Drake, who was still a lad in his teens, must have heard something of the wonders of El-Dorado. Yet, curiously enough, when Captain Hawkins went back he did not go with him. He sailed instead, as a sort of super-cargo in another of Hawkins' ships to Biscay, and there a momentous revelation awaited him, as though to guide him on the path of his destiny.

At San Sebastian about a score of English sailors, once strong and stalwart men of Devon, crept out of the dungeons of the Inquisition and took passage with him home. King Philip had taken off his embargo now, and these men were the remnant of a crew of a Plymouth ship which he had seized in port when the embargo was laid on. The others had rotted to death during the six months that he had bestowed his hospitality upon them. We can imagine what talks they had on the way home, and no doubt El Draque bore the stories of these forlorn mariners well in mind on that most memorable day when he "singed the King of Spain's beard" at Cadiz.

John Hawkins came back from his second voyage richer than ever, and now all the mariners of the South Coast were beginning to dream golden dreams which were soon to become yet more golden deeds, and King Philip, to whom all such ventures were the flattest piracy, began to fear for his monopoly and instructed his ambassador in London to drop the hint that foreign trade with the Indies was forbidden, upon which, foolishly enough, or perhaps not knowing their own true strength, Queen Bess's councillors backed down and forbade John Hawkins to start again.

He, obediently enough, stayed at home, but a certain George Lovell got together an expedition and slipped out to sea westward bound. With him went Francis Drake, at length to see for the first time the blue waters and green shores of El Dorado. This time, however, it proved no El Dorado for him or his companions, for they came back with shattered ships and still worse broken fortunes. They had drawn a blank in the great lottery which half Europe was wanting to gamble in.

Nothing daunted, he shipped again, this time with George Fenner, bound for Guiana. Again, financially speaking, the voyage ended in disaster, but there was one incident in it destined to bear good fruit. A big Portugese galleasse, backed up by six gunboats, tried to enforce the prohibition against foreign trade. Fenner had one ship and a pinnace and with these he fought the "Portugals" and thoroughly convinced them by the logic of shot and steel that he was not the sort of man to be prohibited from doing anything he wanted to do.

This forgotten action is really one of great importance. It was Francis Drake's first taste of fighting, which in itself means a good deal, but it was also the beginning of that lordly and magnificent contempt which the English mariners of that day were soon to feel for all enemies, no matter how strong they might seem. It was this spirit which a few years later was to take Sir Richard Grenville

> With his hundred men on deck and his ninety sick below,

Into the midst of the fifty-three Spanish ships, which he fought for an afternoon and a night before he surrendered so sorely against his will and fell dead of his wounds on the deck of the Spanish flagship. It was this, too, which, when that long seven days' fight against the Armada was raging and roaring up the Channel, brought the flag of the Spanish Rear-Admiral down with a run just because the Little Pirate stamped his foot on the deck of that same *Revenge* and said that he was Francis Drake and had no time to parley.

Meanwhile the rumblings of the war-storm in Europe had been growing louder. The Netherlanders were at last turning on their torturers, Darnley had been murdered and Mary Queen of Scots put in prison, so Gloriana, feeling herself somewhat at leisure, took a hand in the next buccaneering expedition. If may be noted here, by the way, that there was no more ardent buccaneer and slave-trader in her dominions than Good Queen Bess herself. She lent ships though she witheld her commission, and her pirates did the rest. If disaster overtook them or if the Spanish Minister raged against their doings she promptly disowned them and felt sorry for her ships. But if they came back happily filled to the hatches with plundered treasure, she took her dividends and lent more ships.

It was thus with the expedition which sailed out of Plymouth on October 2nd, 1567, under the command of Admiral John Hawkins, whose second officer was Francis Drake. The diplomacy of the times called it the trading venture of Sir William Garrard and Co., but for all that there were two ships of the Royal Navy in it, the *Jesus* and the *Minion*, and the merchandise it carried consisted mainly of cannon and small arms, powder and shot, and cold steel.

The voyage began with a slave-raiding expedition down the Portuguese coast of Africa, whence with five hundred slaves they crossed to the Spanish Main. Here after varying fortunes, they filled their ships with treasure, and Hawkins turned his prows northward for home. But while crossing the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico a furious hurricane burst upon them and drove his gold-and-pearl-laden vessels so far into it, that he came to the bold decision to put into the Spanish port of Vera Cruz to refit.

In the harbour he found twelve great galleons loaded with gold and silver, waiting for the convoy to escort them to Spain. They were utterly at the mercy of the English ships, but John Hawkins, pirate and slave-dealer, was still an English gentleman, so he made a solemn convention to leave the treasure-ships alone on condition of being allowed to refit in the harbour. Hawkins was already known in Spain as the "Enemy of God," and Don Martin Enriquez, the new Governor of Mexico, had come out with special orders to abolish him by any means that might be found the readiest.

Don Martin seems to have thought that in this case,

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treachery would suit best, so he signed the convention and gave his word of honour as a gentleman of Spain that the English ships should be allowed to come and go unmolested. So for three days the work of dismantling went on in peace, and on the fourth, half-disabled as they were, they were attacked. It was a fierce and bloody fight, and it ended in the sinking of four galleons, the wrecking of the Spanish flag-ship, and the killing of five or six hundred Spaniards.

But on the English side only the *Jesus*, the *Minion*, and the *Judith* got away and, shot-shattered and half-provisioned, began to stagger homeward across the wide Atlantic. On the way the *Judith* was lost, and took to the bottom with her all the proceeds of many months of trading and fighting and privation.

He went down with his boot full of blood.

So the expedition came back poorer than it went, and Spain laughed aloud but, as will be seen, somewhat too soon. Drake got home first and no sooner did he land at Plymouth than he took horse for London. It so happened that a little while before Spanish ships carrying a huge amount of money to pay Alva's army in the Netherlands had been driven into the Thames by the Protestant rovers lately mentioned, and Gloriana, who never liked to let a good thing go, had held on to it on one pretext or another until Drake came hot-footed and angry-hearted to tell of the treachery of Vera Cruz.

Gloriana wanted nothing better. Her buccaneering venture had been a failure and here was a way of paying herself for the two ships she had risked, so she turned upon the Spanish Ambassador and told him point blank that until the injury done to her "honest merchants" was redressed she would hold the treasure in pledge. Naturally after that not a groat of it ever got to Alva or his soldiers.

That year, which was 1569, Drake went to Rochelle with Sir Thomas Winter. The next summer he married Mary Newman and a month or two later he was again steering to the westward in two little vessels, the *Dragon* and the *Swan*. The next year he went again, with the *Swan* alone, and this time he came back with a certain idea in his head which was magnificent to the point of absurdity. The adventures of the last two or three years had deepened his contempt for Spanish prowess, and now he laughingly proposed to go back, not to kill the goose that laid the King of Spain's golden eggs, but to rifle the nest in which they were deposited. This was Nombre de Dios, the strongest city in the New World, and the richest to boot.

The means employed were, as was usual in this age of wonders, ridiculously inadequate to the end to which they were devoted. Of late years certain bold mariners have sought to win an ephemeral notoriety by crossing the Atlantic in open boats. Francis Drake set out on a serious and momentous expedition to the Spanish Main in the *Pasha* of 70 tons followed by the *Swan* of 25—that is to say in a couple of fishing-boats. These two cockle-shells were manned by seventy-three men all told, only one of whom had reached the age of thirty. It must have looked more like a parcel of lads going afloat on a holiday spree than an expedition with which all the world was soon to ring.

There is no space here to tell of all that befell these absurd adventurers on their devious and tedious way to Nombre de Dios, though no romancer ever imagined such a story as their adventures make. So it must suffice to say that on July 29th he started out across the Isthmus of Darien at the head of seventy-three men to attack a strong city as big as Plymouth, and with these he actually fought his way into the town, established himself in the centre of it and held it for some hours.

If his men had been the seasoned buccaneers of his later raids he would probably have taken it altogether, but they unhappily found in the Governor's house a stack of silver bars twelve feet high, ten feet broad, and seventy feet long. This was a little too much for the nerves of the Devon boys, but Drake would not let them touch it, since the town was not yet theirs. Then a fearful rain-storm came on just about dawn and put out their matches and ruined their bow-strings, and then a terrible misfortune happened. Drake had been severely wounded in the leg, but he had concealed his hurt until the supreme moment came, and then, as he was leading his handful of heroes to the last attack, he went down with his boot full of blood. Something very like a panic now took his men, not for their own sakes but for his. In vain he stormed at them, and cried angrily:

"I have brought you to the door of the Treasure-house of the World! Will ye be fools enough to go away empty?"

"Your life is more precious to us and England than all the gold of the Indies," they replied, and so by kindly force they carried him down to the boats and rowed away, having accomplished perhaps the most splendid failure in history.

The fame of this exploit instantly echoed through the whole Spanish Main and thence across the Atlantic to Europe. A few days later he avenged his failure at Nombre de Dios by cutting a big ship out from under the guns of Cartagena. Then

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he vanished, leaving no other trace behind him than the poor little abandoned *Swan*. For the next few months nothing was seen of him, though his hand was felt far and wide along the Coast. Spanish store-ships disappeared, dispatch boats were intercepted, and coast-towns were raided with bewildering rapidity and effectiveness.

But all this time the deadly tropical fever was playing havoc with his little handful of men. His brother John died of it and man after man was struck down till at last, out of the seventy-three who had sailed with him from Plymouth, he could only muster eighteen fighting men when he at length started to plunder the mule-train from Panama.

On the fourth day of the journey a very memorable thing happened, for that noon he reached the top of the dividing ridge of the Isthmus and lo! there before him, only a few miles away, lay the smooth, shining expanse of the Pacific Ocean, that long-hidden, jealously-guarded sea on which his were the first English eyes that had ever gazed. He did just what such a man would have done in such circumstances. He fell on his knees and, raising his hands to Heaven, cried aloud:

"Almighty God, of Thy goodness, give me life and leave once to sail an English ship on yonder sea!"

Years afterwards the prayer was granted, and not only did he sail on the Golden Sea, but crossed it while he was making the first voyage that an Englishman ever made round the world.

Were I writing a book instead of an article I could tell of the plundering of the mule-trains, of the taking of Venta Cruz, where, to the astonishment of the Spaniards, he would not allow a single woman or an unarmed man to be hurt, and Nombre de Dios, which did not resist him so well the second time. It must, however be enough to say that this time everything ended happily for the remnant that survived, and that on Sunday morning, August 9th, 1573, while the good folks of Plymouth were in church, they heard a roar of artillery from the batteries followed by an answering salute from the sea and, straightway quitting their devotions, they ran out to learn the good news that Gloriana's Little Pirate had come back safe at last and well loaded up with plunder.

His next venture was nothing less than that famous voyage of his round the world, with the fairy-story of which we have here nothing to do save to say that the fame of it, no less than the enormous treasure, the plunder of a hundred ships and a score of towns, with which the poor sea-worn, worm-eaten, wind-weary *Golden Hind*, staggered one Michaelmas morning into Plymouh Sound, at last convinced Queen Bess that in her dear Little Pirate—whom, by the way, she had never yet openly recognised—she had a champion who was worth a good many thousands of King Philip's soldiers and sailors.

But now the first of Drake's open rewards was to be his. The *Golden Hind* was hauled on to the slips at Deptford, and Gloriana and her court dined on board. When the dinner was over she bade her Little Pirate kneel before her, touched him on the shoulder with his own sword and bade him rise Sir Francis Drake. The Spaniards, by the way, had another title for him, no less honourable in his eyes, and this was "the Master Thief of the New World."

For some considerable time nothing happened beyond the failure of one or two trifling expeditions—which failure was Gloriana's fault, and not Drake's—and the setting of a price of £40,000 by favour of the King of Spain on the Little Pirate's head—an investment of which Drake was soon to pay the dividend in the craft-crowded harbour of Cadiz.

Meanwhile, matters between England and Spain were going from bad to worse. For a few months unscrupulous intrigue, backed up by wholesale lying, hampered Drake most sorely in the preparation of that great work which was nothing less than the establishment of the sea-power of England. Everything that the fickleness of his mistress, the weathercock support of so-called friends at court, and the still more dangerous machinations of English statesmen in the pay of Spain could do, was done. The fleet, to his unutterable rage and disgust, was even placed on a peace-footing, dispite the fact that the noise of the Armada's preparations was still sounding across the Narrow Seas.

But, at last, by some means or other, a certain Spanish spy had got himself suspected and stretched on the rack. Now the rack, as a means of cross-examination, is not an ideal instrument, but it certainly served its purpose this time, for the spy in his torment gave away all the details of a vast scheme which embraced an alliance between France, Spain, and Scotland, together with a general Catholic uprising in England, which was to take place simultaneously with the Triple Invasion.

Never had England, and with her the cause of liberty, stood in such great and deadly peril. Gloriana at last flung diplomatic dalliance to the winds, stopped her lying and chicanery, kicked the Spanish Ambassador out of the country and let her Little Pirate loose. Yet even now there was another lull before the storm and this lull Philip took advantage of to invite a fleet of English corn-ships to his ports, where he seized them to feed that ever-growing sea-monster which he was going to pit against El Draque.

This settled the matter. Drake, only half ready for sea, put out with every ship that could move for fear more orders would come to stop him and, with an insolent assurance which augured well for the great things that he was about to do, actually ran his ships into Vigo Bay and forced the Spanish Governor to allow him to finish his preparations in Spanish waters. Then he turned his eager prows westward, stopping on the way at the Cape Verde Islands to lay waste Vera Cruz and make Santiago a heap of ashes.

Five years ago young William Hawkins had been taken prisoner here and burnt alive with several of the crew, and this was his way of wiping out the old score.

Then he sped on again, spent Christmas at Santa Dominica, refitted his ships and refreshed his men, and then fell like a thunderbolt on the famous city of Santo Domingo, the oldest in the Indies, founded by Columbus himself and ruled over by his brother. It was this that the Little Pirate had been preparing for during those other mysterious voyages of his. The blow was as crushing as it was unexpected, and the prestige of Spain in the West never recovered from it. The town was utterly stripped and dismantled by the victors. Fifty thousand pounds in cash, two hundred and forty guns of all calibres, and an immense amount of other spoil was brought away, and the whole fleet, after living at free quarters for a month, sailed southward, completely refitted and re-victualled at the Spaniards' expense.

When the news got to Europe, it was said that Philip had had "such a cooling as he had never had since he was King of Spain." It is both interesting and instructive to learn that not the least part of the booty took

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the shape of a hundred English sailors who were found toiling as slaves in the Spanish galleys.

Reinforced by these, Gloriana's Little Pirate crossed the Caribbean Sea and fell on Cartagena, the capital of the Spanish Main, and now the richest city in the Indies. Paralysed by the insolence of the attack, it soon fell under its fury and real strength. The booty was enormous, but the moral effect was still greater. The new-born sea-power of England had vindicated itself with triumphant suddenness, and Drake, having picked up the unfortunate remnants of Raleigh's colony in Virginia—the time for colonising not having come yet—entered Plymouth Sound again in the *Elizabeth Bonaventura* at the head of his loot-laden fleet, and reported his arrival, piously regretting that on the way home he had missed the Spanish plate-fleet by twelve hours "for reasons best known to God."

"A great gap hath been opened which is very little to the King of Spain's liking," was the Little Pirate's own comment on the brilliant achievement which had ushered a new power into the world. He might also have put it another way and said that with his well-directed shot he had plugged the source whence flowed the golden stream of Spanish wealth, for indeed it was nothing less than this. The Spanish Colossus suddenly found itself with empty pockets, Spanish credit was ruined at a single blow, the Bank of Seville closed its doors and King Philip, trying to raise a loan of half a million ducats, was flatly refused.

How hard hit he was may be seen from the fact that instead of hurling the whole strength of his laboriously-prepared Armada on the English coasts, he asked for explanations. Gloriana, with an almost splendid mendacity, disowned her Little Pirate once more and swore she had nothing whatever to do with him. But this Drake expected and went on with his own plans, having no doubt honestly paid up the Queen's full share of the plunder.

A few months more of diplomatic dodgery followed and then came the final opening of Gloriana's eyes. A letter stolen from the Pope's own cabinet proved to her beyond all possibility of doubt that the Great Armada was intended for the invasion of England and nothing else. Then she called her Little Pirate to her again and took counsel with him, with the result that the next time he hoisted his flag he did so on board the great *Merchant Royal* at the head of twenty-three sail including five battleships, two first-class cruisers, seven second-class, and about a dozen gun-boats. Nor did he go this time as the Queen's licensed pirate, but as her Admiral of the Fleet, duly commissioned in her name to burn, sink, and destroy, and to use all means whatever to prevent the various divisions of the Armada coming together.

Even now, at the last minute of the eleventh hour, treachery almost did its work, for there was an Opposition and Peace-at-any-price Party in those days, as there have been in later ones. Drake seems to have known what was coming, for, when the Queen's messenger dashed into Plymouth bearing the fatal orders, he had gone.

Happily there was no telegraph in those days. If there had been it would probably have proved the ruin of England and the triumph of Spain. As it was the next news that came was from Drake himself, telling, laconically as usual, how he had "singed the King of Spain's beard in Cadiz." When the facts came out, the said singeing was seen to amount to the destruction by burning and sinking of 12,000 tons of shipping, including some of the finest ships of war that floated. The whole English fleet had, as usual, been revictualled at Spanish expense, and four large ships full of provisions were captured intact.

From Cadiz the triumphant Admiral raged up and down the terror-stricken coast, storming strongholds, and burning and scuttling the store-ships of the Great Armada. He went to Lisbon where Santa Cruz, said to be the greatest sea-captain in Europe, lay, and, after vainly challenging him to come out an fight, politely offered to convoy him and his fleet to England "if by chance his course should lie that way." The fact was that the Colossus was paralysed. Drake had struck out straight at its heart and so doing had proved two principles of no small moment to the making of the British Empire: First, the true frontiers of a maritime nation are its enemies' coasts. Second, the only effective method of defence for such a nation is attack.

It was on his way home from this expedition, storm-shattered and disgusted at missing the Plate-Fleet, which had once more slipped through his fingers, that the Little Pirate took the richest prize of his life. This was the *San Felipe*. She was the King of Spain's own treasure-ship and she came, not from the West, but from the East. Though he knew it not, Drake had that day done a very great thing for England and the making of her Empire, for not only did the *San Felipe* carry treasure and rich stuffs to the value of something like a million and a quarter of our money, but she had on board dispatches, letters, and account books which let the English merchants into all the secrets of Spain's East Indian trade and led to the almost instant formation of the Honourable East India Company, itself an Empire-maker of no small account.

The epic of the Elizabethan era was now beginning to hurry towards its climax. But Gloriana was still surrounded by traitors and even now temporising was the order of the day. She was cast down by remorse for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and she even reprimanded her Little Pirate for doing her too good service and told Philip that he was in disgrace for exceeding instructions.

It was in vain that Drake and the other friends of England prayed and entreated and stormed and swore. In vain they pointed across the Narrow Seas to Parma in the Netherlands at the head of 30,000 of the finest troops in Europe and to the ports of Spain and Portugal, once more swarming with shipping and echoing with the noise of warlike preparations. For a time the liars and traitors had it their own way again. Drake and Howard implored her to let them get their ships fitted and go and fight the Armada in its own ports. No, she would do nothing. And she did nothing till at last arrived that fatal evening on which:

There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to Plymouth Bay.

Golden weeks and priceless opportunities had been wasted by the fatal lethargy of the Court. Drake and Howard, instead of falling as they longed to do, on the wind-bound Armada in Vigo Bay and doing with it as Drake had done at Cadiz, were kept on the defensive, straining like blood-hounds at the leash, knowing that every moment that the good wind lasted was heavily fraught with fate for England and perhaps the world.

At length the wind went round and Drake, marvelling in angry wonder "how God could have sent a south-west wind just then," found himself baffled and beaten back, while Medina-Sidonia with his released Armada sailed triumphantly for the Channel. There was only one

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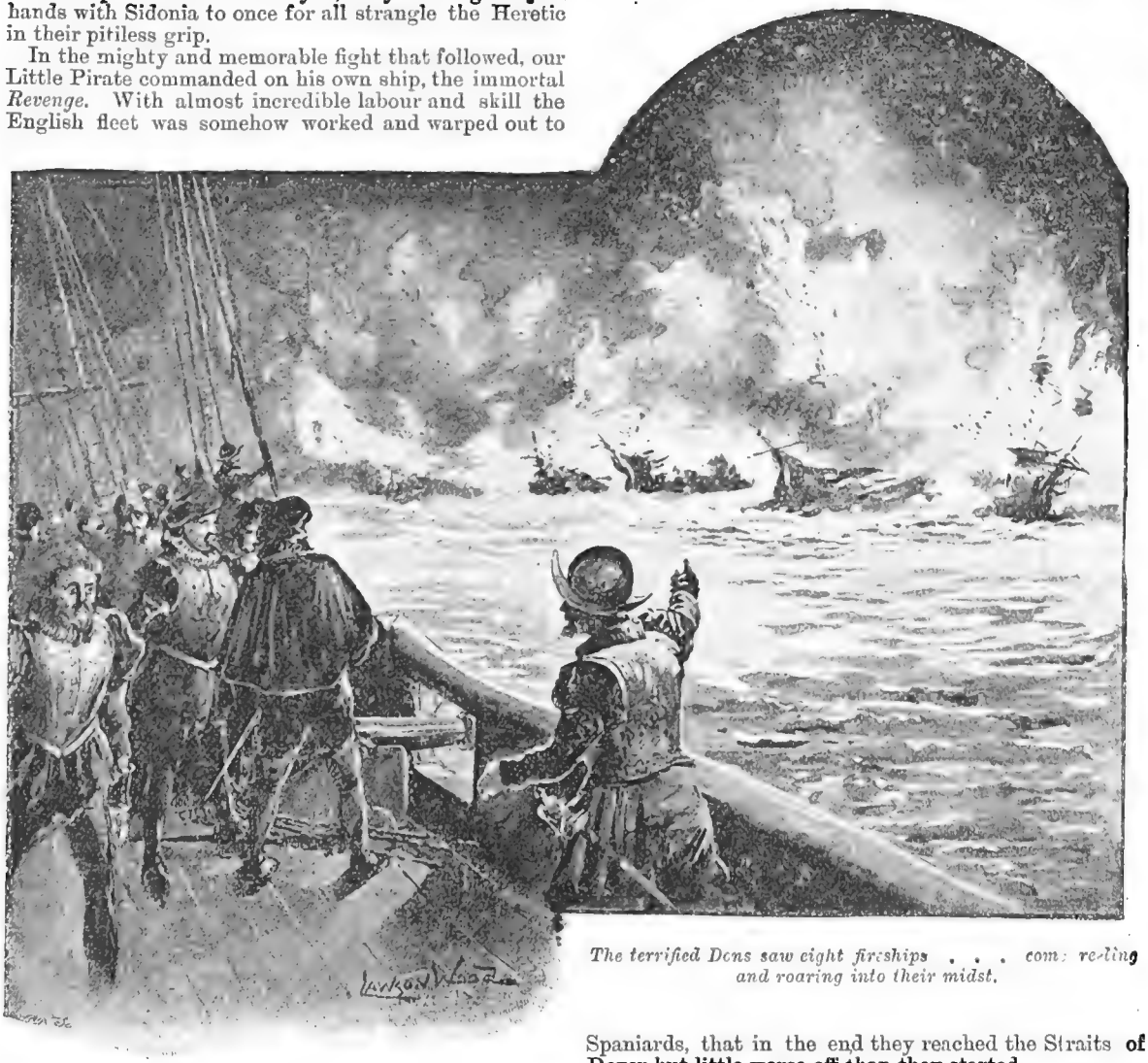
thing now to do if England was to be saved. Valour and heroism, self-devotion and skill must repair the damage that treason, lying, and weakness of head or heart had done. By this time the Armada should have been a crushed and tangled mass of burning wreckage, and so it would have been if Drake had had his way, and now here it was stronger than ever, its ships covering the hitherto inviolate sea; and there was Parma, with his transports still undestroyed, only waiting to join hands with Sidonia to once for all strangle the Heretic in their pitiless grip.

In the mighty and memorable fight that followed, our Little Pirate commanded on his own ship, the immortal *Revenge*. With almost incredible labour and skill the English fleet was somehow worked and warped out to the westward until, when that famous Sunday morning dawned, the sun looked, as has been truly said, upon a sight glorious for England. There was the great Armada, cresent-shaped, rolling up the Channel, and there, right in the wind's eye and on its rear, were two English squadrons, and a third was gallantly advancing out of Plymouth.

This one with true Elizabethan insolence steered right across the front of the huge fleet, firing into such of the Dons as came within range. Then it went about and joined the other English ships to windward.

Everyone has read of the long running seven-day fight that followed; everyone knows how the little, light-heeled English ships ran in and out among the great unwieldly galleons, tempting them out of their formation, and, having isolated one, fell on her like a pack of dogs on a wolf, and how, in spite of all that the English Admiral and his captains could do, the ever changing wind, and the ever succeeding calms so helped the Spaniards, that in the end they reached the Straits of Dover but little worse off than they started.



The terrified Dons saw eight fireships . . . coming reeling and roaring into their midst.

If Drake could have had his way these tactics would have been pushed farther, and every mile of the way would have been disputed, but Lord Howard, though a brave man, lacked the all-daring assurance of the conqueror of Santo Domingo and Cartagena. He would not fight until he had joined with Seymour and Wynter in the Straits. So it came about that on the seventh day—that is to say Saturday afternoon—the Great Armada, the poorer only by some dozen craft that had been captured or battered into wreck and ruin, was sailing gloriously past Calais with the French and

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English land well in sight and Dunkirk, the trysting place with Parma, only eighteen miles away.

England has never passed through such anxious hours as she did that afternoon and night. It seemed as though, after all, her new-found sea-strength had failed her, and that, despite all the brilliant exploits of Gloriana's Little Pirate in the West, he was powerless to protect her nearer home. What would have happened in the ordinary course of events no one now knows, for the Spaniards, stricken by some inexplicable madness, suddenly altered the whole course of events by what can only be called a freak of idiocy.

Medina-Sidonia, after having accomplished the most brilliant feat of seamanship that his age had seen, gave orders for the Armada to anchor! A few hours more and its work would have been done, with what results to England one scarcely cares to picture. So unexpected was this piece of priceless good fortune by the English captains that they had to drop their own anchors within range of the Spanish guns to save entangling themselves with the big Spanish ships.

All Sunday the two fleets lay within sight of each other, anxious councils of war were held on both sides, and so night fell without a shot being fired or anything done. By midnight the tide was swirling strong and swift from the English to the Spanish ships, and Drake was busy preparing his crowning piece of devilry for the edification of the Dons.

At about one o'clock on that calm, moonless morning patches of flickering, leaping flame began to show among the twinkling English lights, and these grew swiftly higher and broader, and a few minutes later the terrified Dons saw eight fire-ships, crowned mast-high with leaping flames, come reeling and roaring into their midst.

Then there was cutting of cables and slipping of moorings, and labouring with frantic haste to get the ships under sail. Galleon crashed into gallease, and gallease into cruiser in the wild haste and fatal confusion.

Marvellous to say, not a single Spanish ship took fire, but behind the fire-craft there was something more terrible and deadly still—El Draque and his guns. At the supreme moment Lord Howard weakly and foolishly turned aside to capture or sink a disabled gallease. If the rest of the fleet had followed him there might have been no Battle of Gravelines, no Trafalgar of the 16th century. But, as has been well said, it was the hour for which Francis Drake had been born. He set the *Revenge* on the wind, and, followed by the rest of the squadron, bore down in grim and ominous silence on the huddled, entangled Dons. Within pistol range of the great *San Martin* the *Revenge* burst into sudden thunder and flame and drove on enwreathed in smoke. In her wake ship after ship came on in perfect order, each raining her iron storm into the rent and splintering sides of the Dons as they passed.

Then from Dover way came the roar of guns telling that Wynter and Seymour had got to work, and so for three hours they went at it, the Little Pirate ever first, and revelling in the work that he loved to do for his dear England. He had forgotten all his mistress's slights and fickleness, all the harm that Court traitors had done him, all his suffering and privation on the windless seas and burning lands of the West. It was the hour of England's fate and his own, and there he was in the thick of it and was happy.

After three hours Howard and his laggards came up and the fight roared on flank and front and rear. Although the schoolbooks say but little about it, there had never been such a sea-fight in the world before, nor one on whose end such great issues hung. The Spaniards, caught between El Draque and the sands of Dunkirk—which to them was something worse than being between the Devil and the deep sea—fought with all their ancient valour, but ship after ship, as the battle roared on through the day, went down riddled with shot or took fire and blew up, till at length out of the forty battleships and cruisers which Sidonia had somehow got together to protect his rear, only sixteen were left, and they were little better than shot-shattered, fire-blackened hulks.

The powder on both sides was nearly done, but so too was the work of Drake and his ships. Fathom by fathom the north-west wind was driving the Dons on to the mud-banks of the Netherland shore, and the Little Pirate in his well-named *Revenge* was hanging on their weather quarter watching—and I doubt not praying—for the moment of their final ruin.

And yet he was not to see it, for when there was but five fathoms of water between the Spanish keels and the Dutch mud the north-wester dropped to a calm, a fresh south-wester sprang up in its place, and for the fourth time in seven days the Armada was saved from utter destruction by those fickle winds to which a pious sentiment has ascribed its ruin.

Down went the Spanish helms, and round came the dripping, labouring, Spanish prows, and ere long all that was left of King Philip's fleet was staggering away to the northward to begin that awful voyage round the north of Scotland and past the wild Irish coast from which so few were to return. Meanwhile the Little Pirate hung on to the heels of the flying Armada for two days and nights, until at length a tempest came rolling up over the Dogger Bank, and he ran in for safety under the Scottish shore, cheerfully leaving the Dons to the winds of Heaven, and the rocks that were waiting to finish what his own guns had begun.

With the victory of Gravelines, Drake's work as an Empire-maker comes to an end. The expedition to Portugal, for all its booty, was a failure and did nothing to enhance his fame. If his advice had been taken Spain might have been crushed and humbled for ever, but such was the hopeless weakness and vacillation at Court that, even after the Armada had shown her the true designs of Philip, Gloriana got into negotiations with him again. Over and over again her Little Pirate besought her to give him the means of striking the blow that should crush Spain and make England undisputed mistress of the seas, but it was not to be, and so at length, sick and sore at heart, he sailed away again to his beloved West, never to return.

There is nothing in this last expedition of his that is noteworthy save its continued misfortunes. It seemed that as though when the little *Revenge* went down, as she did in the midst of the fifty-three Spanish ships which she had fought "for a day and a night," she had taken her old commander's good luck down with her. At last on the deadly island of Escudo de Veragua the two guardian demons of El Dorado, fever and dysentry, struck him down with many another of his men. He lived to get away, but not for long, and six days afterwards, when his fleet came to anchor off Porto Bello, the heroic Little Pirate breathed his last and his gallant soul went to its account, passing away from earth on the very spot that had been the scene of his first sea-fight and his first victory.

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A Broken Mask

BY JOAN BARRETT.

CHAPTER X.

Two Events.

The sun, as it fell upon the well-redded floor of the old dairy, made the smooth bricks yellow-red in colour. When it touched the earthenware pans of unskimmed milk the cream looked richer and yellower, and the tin skimmers and strainers hanging upon the walls gained in brightness. Di's hair caught the sunshine and imprisoned some of its lustre as she moved briskly from pan to pan and removed the cream with deft fingers to the big white churn.

One's heart may be heavy, but there is always work of some kind to help one to forget, and the harder one works the easier the pain becomes. No one who looked at Di's quickly moving figure and absorbed face would have thought that she had passed a restless night, and that while she was mechanically measuring the cream her thoughts were far away from her occupation.

Laying her hand upon his arm.

"Slop, slop," went the cream as Di turned the churn handle, and "cheep, cheep," called the sparrows upon the moss and lichen-covered dairy roof. Out in the garden the snowdrops and crocuses raised their pretty heads and peeped through the snow at the white-covered evergreens and bushy dead-looking rose trees. The snow had broken down the creeping rose that climbed to the upper windows, and one long bough trailed heavily upon the path. The little pieces of red cloth with which it had been tacked to the wall looked like red flowers or berries upon its dark branches.

"Don't think about it! Don't think about it!" said the cream now to Di. "It will all come right! It *must* come right! John Gillway is not a bad man, and Kitty can't be a bad woman! *He* said you should know before long! Wait! Wait! Learn patience."

The dairy door opened, and the Nabob entered quickly, and closed the door behind him. His face was grey and haggard. There was an expression in his face that Di had never yet seen. All the good humour and the sunny frankness had died in his bright eyes, leaving only their brilliancy—a cold, steely sparkle, as though some inner emotion had killed the warm enjoyment of life, and that look of "Hail fellow, well met," with which the Nabob had met the entire world. There were dark circles around them. The lids were heavy. When Di laid her hand in his it felt cold and moist.

"What a charming old dairy yours is, Di," said he in a tone of forced cheerfulness. "By George, what a lot of milk your cows give! We don't get a quarter of the quantity." He bent over a pan, turning his back upon Di. "Seen Kitty this morning?"

"No! She never comes so early as this," Di answered. "It is only nine o'clock."

"She spoke of coming to see you early. I thought the little woman might have turned out. Well, I'm off, Di. Only looked in to say good-morning on my way to the Admiral's."

He turned, extending his hand. His face had grown greyer, and as his eyes met Di's steady, penetrating regard, she saw them grow humid. A great terror gripped her heart.

"Oh, Bernard!" she cried. "What is the matter? I can see that you are troubled!"

"I in trouble! Not I! Don't you worry your head about me, Di," he said, making a movement to gain the door.

Di stopped him, laying her hand upon his arm.

"I feel sure that you are keeping something hidden from me—and it is something about Kitty."

"Kitty!" exclaimed the Nabob with a harsh laugh. "Well, I never did! How you women do jump at hasty conclusions! Kitty, indeed!"

"I know that something has happened, something to trouble you. If you don't tell me why you came here so early asking for Kitty, I shall go to The Towers and try to discover your reason."

The Nabob hesitated no longer. He spoke now with curt abruptness.

"Kitty isn't at home. That's all. I hoped she had come here."

"Not at home!" Di repeated. "Since—when?"

Her fingers tightened their hold upon the Nabob's arm.

"I don't know—her bed has not been slept in; her maid says she hasn't seen her since she left her alone in her room last night."

Di started. Her hand fell from the Nabob's arm, and dropped heavily to her side.

"Perhaps she couldn't sleep—and has gone for a walk—or a canter."

"She hasn't taken her horse. Her maid told me that some out-door clothing of Kitty's was missing; a seal jacket and cap and a muff, I think. If she has gone for a walk it is to meet that scoundrel, Gillway! Good Heavens!" cried the Nabob striding to the end of the dairy. "I have tried hard not to see things that must have made the whole countryside laugh at my blindness. I wanted Kitty to understand that I trusted her; I told myself that I *would* trust her, aye, in spite of my own observations. I saw how dull she grew when we were alone, and how she brightened at that fellow's approach! She never loved me, Di, never! God knows why she married me!"

He threw himself upon a stool, fixing his eyes upon the red bricks.

"When Gillway first came to the house, I spoke to Kitty. It was a difficult job; but I did it. I was wrong. I ought not to have said one word about him. She set up her back, and seemed to delight in meeting him, and in asking him to call, and to bring her things from Worley—books and music and wools! Then she used to meet him out in the fields and the lanes. I'm not a good horseman; I never hardly went with her, and then, it is so devilish hard to make oneself think ill of one's own wife, you know. Di, I thought I'd let her have her fling, and this is the result."

"Kitty has been thoughtless, very thoughtless," said Di tremulously. "But nothing more, Bernard. When she comes home presently from her walk—for, of course, she has gone for a walk—talk to her as you have to me. Tell her frankly that she is wrong to have so intimate a friendship with Mr. Gillway. She is very childish; but she will see how grave the matter is when you show her."

"And the end of it will be tears and a squabble. I haven't the power to make Kitty happy. I've done my best! I took that ghastly great house to please her; I've filled it with the people she liked to see around her, and what's the use? She was wild with excitement for a few weeks, and then everything palled upon her. We were never meant for each other, my poor little girl and I! Her tastes are so opposite to mine. I like the country, a plain and simple life without shams, and the eternal struggle to appear so many pounds richer than your neighbour, and Kitty revels in making people believe that she has ten pounds in her purse when it only holds five. Sometimes when I've thought over things I've found myself dreading the coming years, Di; for we must grow farther and farther apart, instead of becoming comrades and inseparable."

He covered his face with his hands, and sat in silence for a few moments. Di did not speak, her heart was too full for words.

"Well," said the Nabob rising and looking at her more cheerfully. "It's no good to worry. One can't go through life without finding a few small rough places. Depend upon it, Kitty finds it jolly hard, too, poor little soul! and she's so young! Just think, one can't expect much wisdom from a girl of twenty-one! I wonder, Di—I hardly like to ask you, it's such a delicate matter—but if you would speak to Kitty about these walks with Gillway. A woman," said he, with such pathos in his voice that the pain in Di's tender heart increased, "can do that kind of thing so much better than a clumsy man, and Kitty couldn't feel vexed with *you*."

"I'll speak to her, Bernard."

In the dairy doorway the Nabob turned. A shaft of sunlight falling upon his moustache turned it to gold, and accentuated the pallor of his haggard features.

"He can't have slept," thought Di, noticing the fatigue and worn look of his handsome face, and a feeling of indignation swept over her as she thought of Kitty, who might even then be flirting and laughing with John Gillway.

"I say," said the Nabob, very wistfully, "you'll forgive me for speaking like that about Kitty, won't you, Di? I've been bottling it up so long; I never meant anyone to know how I felt about it, least of all you. It seems a mean action to talk in that way of one's wife, eh, Di? It's like letting out a contemptible admission of one's own faults. After all, Gillway is the most to blame. It's a poor revenge for Kitty's slighting him to make people talk about her imprudence and to try to ruin her happiness; for I *might* have made her happy if he'd let her alone. That's his idea—a mean hound!"

Di's head dropped, and a mist gathered before her eyes. She felt the Nabob take her hand and press it, and knew that he had gone because of the sunshine that all at once had made a large patch upon the floor where he had been standing.

There was no sunshine in her heart. An awful foreboding of the truth oppressed her. She sat down and tried to think, and when her thoughts became unbearable she sprang up and recommenced her work.

The butter was ready for sending to market when Betty came "clack-clack" into the dairy upon her patterns, and with a great armful of fresh cabbage leaves to wrap round the pale yellow pats.

"The master's waitin' for the basket," said she. "Why don't you go to Worley 'long with him? Your cheeks are like that milk for colour."

Di rubbed her face with her apron. No, she could not go to Worley. She must go to Honeypots Farm and see John Gillway. She would make him explain his mysterious words of the previous night; she would tell him how wicked it was to foster Kitty's weakness, and if she met them together, John Gillway and Kitty, she would not spare either of them.

She waited until Farmer Strange had driven away in the light cart with the butter and apples and vegetables packed around his big feet, and at the back of the one seat, and then she hastened to put on her hat and jacket, and hurried across the fields to the farm.

She met no one on the way. A flock of gossiping starlings and a few sedate rooks were the only living creatures that crossed her path. Emily and Aunt Shales were not at home, for the house door was fastened when she reached it. Di had not thought to find the house closed; she had forgotten that it was market day, and that Aunt Shales and her maid might have gone to Worley. As she was turning despondently away a man appeared from the back of the rick where he had evidently been watching to see if anyone would open the door to Di's knocks. He was a smart, dapper-looking, thin little gentleman, with a clean-shaven face, and remarkably bright, penetrating eyes, that seemed to take in every detail of the girl's dress at one swift glance. His manner was very apologetic when he spoke.

"There seems to be no one at home," said he with a wide sweep of his soft felt hat as he approached Di. "I have knocked several times, and I can get no reply whatever."

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"It is market-day at Worley," Di said. "I expect everyone has gone there."

"Then they may not return until late, as the market does not begin until one o'clock. How very unfortunate. I was directed here by a person at the station, of whom I made a few inquiries about lodgings," said the stranger, with a gentle rub of his well-gloved hands. "I am seeking apartments, and hearing that Mr. Gillway was a well-conducted, single young man, I hoped to induce him to let me a couple of rooms for a short period. I—I was at one time acquainted with some members of his family."

"Indeed," said Di politely.

"Mr. Gillway has succeeded beyond his expectations in making the farm pay, I hope?"

"I'm afraid not!" answered Di, glancing at the gate by which she had entered the farm-yard.

"How very unfortunate! And yet," said the stranger indicating a shed with a jerk of his head, "he appears to have purchased a great quantity of expensive machinery."

He glanced questioningly at Di, as if seeking an explanation of the circumstance from her. She felt that she was

"I am quite unable to answer you."

being cross-questioned, and her expressive face betrayed her dislike to the process. The stranger was quick to read her expression.

"I would ask you to pardon my apparent inquisitiveness," said he blandly. "Seeing in you an acquaintance of Mr. Gillway, I presumed to gratify my curiosity about this son of my very dear friend. I fear that he has not made many friends in the neighbourhood?"

"I think not."

"He lives a very retired life?"

"Very."

"Has no visitors, I suppose, no gentlemen to visit him?"

"I believe not."

"Does he seem to—to—have much ready money at his command? I—I really would not venture to ask you all these questions if my anxiety concerning his financial position was not so great."

"I am quite unable to answer you," said Di haughtily. "Your best plan will be to put these questions to Mr. Gillway himself." She bowed stiffly and left him. The little gentleman looked after her ruefully, as though regretting his indiscretion.

On her way home, the stranger now mingled himself with the many worrying, torturing questions that filled Di's heart and head with pain. Who was he? Why did he appear so anxious for particulars of John Gillway's life?

No one had called during her absence, Betty assured her in answer to her eager inquiries. Di made a sorry pretence of eating her dinner, and feeling utterly incapable of work or rest, she got one of the farm lads to harness the pony in the smart little dog-cart that Kitty had left behind as a parting gift to her sister, and drove to The Towers. It was three o'clock before she drew up before the great hall door.

Did the footman who answered the door look at her oddly when she asked if Mrs. Eliot was at home? And was it merely her excited imagination, or did he answer her with a strange, insolent inflection in his languid drawl, as he informed her that Mrs. Eliot had been absent all the morning, and had not returned to lunch?

"And Mr. Eliot? Is he in?" she asked.

"No, m'm. Mr. Eliot has gone out on horseback."

Di lingered a moment in painful indecision. The footman's outer manner was respectful enough, and yet it struck her that there was an expression of familiarity in his smooth, fresh face, as though he guessed her uneasiness and its cause—aye, and knew some explanation of his mistress's absence.

"I'll leave a written message for Mr. Eliot," said Di after a pause.

The man bowed and ushered her into a costly-furnished morning room, lingering at the door while Di wrote a few hurried lines imploring the Nabob to send and let her know when Kitty returned, or to call upon her. As she laid the addressed letter upon the bureau, the footman advanced noiselessly into the room and stood looking at her expectantly.

"Give this to your master the moment that he returns," said Di. "You will not forget, will you?"

"No'm!" He was still regarding her in that perplexing manner, and Di flushed, drawing herself up as she went out to the trap. There was rude admiration in the man's eyes.

"Oh, Kitty, Kitty!" murmured Di, tightening her hold upon the reins. *"That man knows."*

She never knew how she reached home. Hedges and trees and landscape blotted themselves together into one thick mist. She was thinking of her old father and wondering how she was to break to him the news of Kitty's flight. For Di felt sure now that Kitty had run away from her husband. Dared she hope that Kitty had gone away alone?

The sure-footed little pony turned in at the farm gates of its own accord, and halted in the yard. A farm lad slouched forward to lead it into the stable, and Di hurried into the kitchen, her heart beating high with a new and delicious hope. She had caught the sound of voices. How foolish and wicked she had been ever to doubt Kitty's loyalty, or to have harsh thoughts of her. She had merely been for a long, long walk, and now she was at the farm.

How unreasonable fear made women! But on the threshhold of the kitchen Di paused, chilled with the cold pang of disappointment. A visitor was indeed seated in Farmer Strange's favourite Windsor armchair, with her little fat feet perched snugly upon the polished steel fender. And the visitor, resplendent in a very tight-fitting three-quarter length black jacket, trimmed with dilapidated, rusty black fur, and wearing a ridiculously small bonnet, filled with gaudy scarlet poppies, was John Gillway's housekeeper, Aunt Shales. She turned her grey head as poor Di

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advanced, and smiled in a very flurried manner, rising hastily from her seat to show that although admitted upon friendly terms with the young mistress of Greyhouse, she had not forgotten that a difference existed in their social positions.

"Well, there, now!" she exclaimed. "Seems as if it was to be, now don't it? As sure as eggs is eggs, if ever I puts my nose inside your kitching I'm safe to find you out, Miss Di. Not as one can bide in the house all the time, cold as it is. But as I say, it's seasonable for the time of the year, so it is, now, and I'm one of them as 'ud rather be friz up and perished to nothink with a good English frost, than be grilled to a cinder, as my po'r Bill says he's a-bein' done at this very minute in India, with the sun they've got out there. I've no doubt but what the po'r boy 'll come back as

Di wrote a few hurried lines.

black as the niggers what lives in them outlandish parts, and him with a skin as fair as a lily when he 'listed in the army. Oh, he's a good-lookin' lad is Bill, or I should say he *was*. There's no knowin' what he's like now, what with gettin' his nose knocked to a pulp with a football when he was stationed at York, afore startin', and losing a front tooth at the same time! But it don't show in his photo. Oh, he *do* make such a nice photo, do Bill. He never did turn after 'is father, an' as I says, if he ain't got much to be thankful for in this world, he's got *that*—which is somethink, ain't it now?"

She appealed to Di, turning from her to Betty. The old servant was sitting facing the fire. She did not appear to have heard Aunt Shales, but stared into the red logs with a dazed, bewildered expression upon her rosy, withered cheeks that filled Di with terror.

"Does *she* know, too?" she thought, and turned to Aunt Shales as though for confirmation of her suspicion.

To her amazement Aunt Shales tapped her pocket, winked, glanced mysteriously at Betty, and then nodded her head towards the communicating door with the dining-room. So vigorously did she nod that the poppies in her bonnet quivered long after the motion had ceased.

"Betty," said Di, "will you let us have tea in the parlour?"

A fire was burning in the dining-room, throwing rosy shafts of light upon a large bowl of snowdrops that stood in the centre of the table. Aunt Shales paused in passing to admire them.

"Pretty things, they be, to be sure," said she. "An' good for sore eyes, so I'm told, not as I can speak from experience, never havin' yet bin bothered that way, though, as I said to myself this mornin,' it 'ud have been better for me and for *somebody* else if I'd been born blind, that it would! But there, I've long had my own ideas an' suspicions about things, for, as I've said many and many a time, where *do* the money come from to pay his way, seein' as he's no great hand at farmin', an' grumbles if everything put afore his eyes at meal times ain't of the very best quality, an' never gettin' any letters, an' out at all hours, an' all them heathenish books writ in some lingo unknown to honest folk, an' them trunks all locked up, it didn't look natshral, Miss Di, an' I'm not one to have dust thrown in my eyes for all as you never hears me say one word about nothink. Two and two don't make five *unless* you puts the one in, an' then, as we all knows, cases is altered. But right's right, and, as I've always said, wrong ain't no man's right, leastways it shouldn't ought to be, should it now?"

"I'm afraid," said Di feebly, "that I don't quite understand."

"Course you don't! As if anybody but them as lived under the same roof with him would understand; and Heavens knows it's hard enough for them, I 'spose," whispered Aunt Shales. "You knows the look of real di'mon's, seein' as you've wore 'em your own self an' have mixed with them as owns a-plenty?"

"Yes," Di answered, growing more and more puzzled.

Aunt Shales drew a bulky packet from her pocket, and handed it to Di.

"All bank notes!" said she. "I ain't to be deceived in *them*, an' they makes in all four hundred pounds!"

Again she dipped into her capacious pocket, pulled out a large leather case, opened it, and gave it to Di, drawing back a step or two to watch Di's face from her half-shut eyes.

Di looked at a diamond pendant that sparkled and flashed in the firelight. Upon the inside of the lid she read the following inscription:

To Mrs. Charles Lealter, upon the occasion of her silver wedding, a slight testimonial from her tenants and servants.

"Oh, Aunt Shales!" exclaimed Di. "What does it mean? How did you get these things?"

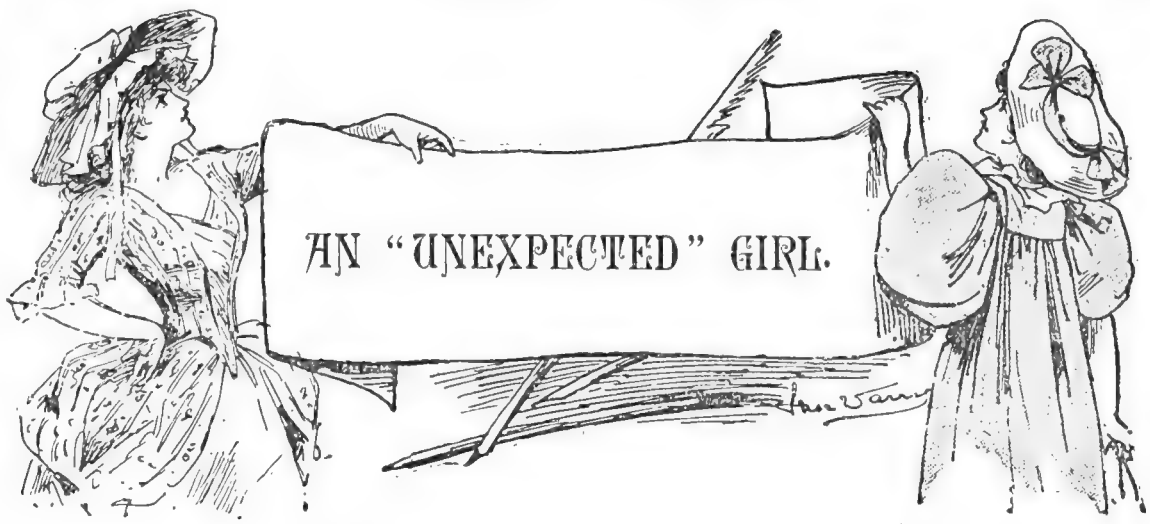
"I *have* bin wrongfully accused of tellin' lies, an' by members of my own fam'ly, as oughter have more respect for their own flesh and blood than to backbite them as is more innocent in the way o' lyin' than the lamb unborn," said Aunt Shales with deep feeling. "But a good conshuns 'ill carry you over a dirty puddle, Miss Di, and as I says you can't walk out in a muddy road an' not get a splash or two, no matter how careful-like you picks your footsteps, an' not bein' the Queen of England, I can't expect carpit laid down for me. *He'd* lef' the key in his writin' table—an' that's how I come by them things, Miss Di, and I do feel that grateful as that chatterin' magpie of a Em'ly didn't spy the key afore I did; for I knows what she is for a-peepin' and a-pryin' into things what ain't no concern of her'n, and couldn't be, not if she lived to a hundred! But them gals is like cats for creepin' everywhere an' sniffin' out things, that they be now, an' I knows it to my sorrer.

An' goodness knows as it's bad 'nough for me to carry inside me that I've bin in the employ of a house-breaker, an' no doubt he's a highwayman as well, without havin' that gal to carry the news all over Thorneydene, for them as ain't had no eddication to chuck in my face!"

Di drew a long, shuddering sigh as Aunt Shales paused to regain breath. Every flash from the sparkling trinket in her hand seemed a confirmation of the guilt of John Gillway.

(To be continued.)

"THE BIG BUDGET" IS COMING.



AN "UNEXPECTED" GIRL.

Her chief beauty lies in her originality. She holds you by her variety. Her actions not only carry this out, but she looks, if I may use the expression, "various."

Her face reminds me of a house built at different periods, its architecture is so "new," though the *tout ensemble* is charming. Her forehead is Grecian; her nose—is there a period that expresses a *retroussé* nose? Her mouth is what I call "early English," the sort of mouth you see in pictures of Queen Victoria, when she gives vent to that classic remark: "I will be good." Her hair is pure Corinthian, twisted, you see, and fluted, and yet massive enough to suggest the analogy. On the whole, she is satisfying.

I went down to see her the other evening and, to my horror, she appeared on the verandah on crutches. She was very solemn.

"Good gracious!" I exclaimed; "what is the matter?"

I suppose my face expressed rather more alarm than I intended, for she waved me off with one of the crutches.

"No, no; it's all right," she said. "Miss Macklimp was here to-day and I was nasty and impatient to her; she's a cripple, you know; and now I'm punishing myself; I'm trying to see how it feels."

I wasn't in the least surprised when she said she intended to keep it up all that evening. I hate crutches, they are so distant, so I persuaded her to pretend she was blind instead. I said it would be just as salutary. She cast away the crutches and shut her eyes.

"Oh, I don't like it!" she cried.

"You'll have to do it," I remarked; "your behaviour to Miss Macklimp was abominable. Now you see what it's like to be afflicted. I wouldn't like to spoil the effect of your little lesson, so I'll lead you about the garden for a while, though, of course, its a great nuisance."

She opened one eye and looked at me with all the suspicion that can be thrown into a single optic.

"Are you quite sure it's a nuisance?" she asked.

"To be quite candid," I replied, "do you think it could be anything else? I'm really engaged to play lawn tennis with Miss Foot, but this is duty, and however disagreeable——"

"Oh, you can go," she said icily. "I dare say it will be just as effective and twice as pleasant if Jemima, the housemaid, leads me about. Good-night."

"No," I said heroically, for I was determined to see the thing through, "I'll stay. You must promise upon your honour to keep your eyes shut, because we're not having a game." She opened her eyes at once and looked at me indignantly. "There you go," I went on. "What *is* the use of going about it in that spirit? If you're in fun, of course I've nothing more to say, but if you're in earnest you really should try to exercise a little self-control."

"All right," she said quite meekly. "Go on."

"Perhaps you'd better hold my hand," I suggested.

"No, no. It's so much more awful to try without you—I mean—to go by myself," and she went down the verandah steps and ran into a rose bush.

"You might have told me," she exclaimed indignantly, sucking her finger, with her eyes wide open.

"Now, my dear girl," I said in a fatherly way,

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"how can you realise the sensation of blindness if you open your eyes and stare at everything you run into? Take my advice and let me lead you. Most blind people have someone to guide them, a child or——"

"A puppy," she exclaimed in accents of delight. "Yes, I'm the poor blind Paper Man, and you are the puppy."

Perhaps she noticed something chilling in my silence, for she slipped her hand into mine and said:

"Are you bored? Do you want to go?"

Wild horses couldn't have dragged me from the spot, but it wouldn't do to tell her that, so I stifled a yawn, and said that as it was getting dusky it would be too late for tennis and I might as well stay. We went down the path into the shrubbery. She was keeping her eyes shut. I knew, because I was looking at her hard, and I knew I was looking at her hard because I stepped on two flower-pots and narrowly escaped a sunken water-barrel. She heard the crash.

"Where are we?" she asked.

"Don't look!" I cried. I was getting her nicely away from the house. "We're close to the dining-room window, and your Aunt Jane is on her way up to the summer-house."

"Let's go to Aunt Jane," she said. I don't think she believed me.

"All right," I said cheerfully, "but on no account open your eyes; you are doing very nicely." And I ran her carefully into a bush and then extricated her with my arm around her waist.

"You did that on purpose!" she cried, wriggling herself free. "It wasn't fair!"

"What wasn't fair?" I asked innocently, "and why should I do that on purpose? The path is confoundedly narrow." (It was eight feet wide where I stood.) "You can't seriously think it's any pleasure to me to go blundering about a garden like an intoxicated beetle. Look here—I mean *don't* look here—I'm going to tie my handkerchief over your eyes. I believe you've opened them at least five times."

She didn't deny it, and I tried to fix the handkerchief. When people have such soft hair they must expect it to be a nuisance to them. I like hair that is hard and bristly and can stand up for itself, but hers is simply impossible. It wasn't my fault that it got all twisted into the handkerchief and I had to cut off quite a large piece with my pocket-knife. I cut the handkerchief, too, which was much more serious, and will probably cost me half-a-crown to replace.

"And now," I said, "Aunt Jane is angry with you for your excessive unkindness to Miss Macklimp, isn't she?"

"She hasn't spoken to me all the evening," said the blind Paper Man pathetically.

"And you'd like to make it up, wouldn't you? Well, I have a plan. At this moment I can see Aunt Jane" (to the eye of the mind all things are clear) "standing at the door of the summer house at the top of the path. I will go away and you will walk up, just as you are, and give her a kiss and tell her you are sorry. Don't move the handkerchief, and she will see that you are really in earnest. Just go straight on; you can't miss her. Good-night, so glad to have been of use."

I couldn't say exactly how it happened. It just struck me that Aunt Jane might not be there after all, so I went round a side path to the summer-house to make sure. She was *not* there; she must have gone away during the interval. I never like to spoil an apology, so I thought it best to stand where Aunt Jane should have stood when the blind Paper Man came up the path. Of course it was a nuisance, but then——

Maggie Mann.

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REDUCTION OF SUPERFLUOUS FAT.

WE have received a copy of "Corpulency, and the Cure," and a very useful and well-written little treatise it is, showing how from 3lb. to 14lb. of fat can be harmlessly removed in a week. We quote rather an amusing extract which was published on the subject by the *European Mail*. The Editor says: "I noticed the other day that someone had contributed a paragraph containing instructions for persons who wished to reduce their weight. I don't doubt but what, if the advice given were followed, the desired effect would result; but to follow it out properly one would not have much time left during the day. Care was to be taken not to eat this and not to eat that, while to dream of certain drinks was sufficient to increase the weight by about a hundredweight. Now, Mr. F. C. Russell, of Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C., is my man. His treatment does not consist of any starvation business. Quite the contrary, for the mixture he prescribes is an invigorating tonic, and improves the appetite wonderfully. He treats corpulence as a disease, and so long as his instructions are followed, no one need worry about dietary restrictions, but jog along in peace and continue the usual breakfast of half-a-dozen poached eggs, two or three gammon rashers, and a pound of steak. It is a good job for the success of the 'Pickwick Papers' that the book was written before Mr. Russell came upon the scene, otherwise it is doubtful whether we should ever have heard of those jovial characters, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Weller, senior, or that truly wonderful being, the Fat Boy. The only case I can speak of personally in connection with this mixture, is a friend of mine, who tried it with remarkably good effect. He was enormously fat, and although he did not believe in Mr. Russell's treatment, when someone told him the mixture made a very pleasant drink in hot weather, he tried it for this purpose. This was in June, a few years ago. In September he had to be measured for a new suit of clothes, as those he had were getting very loose, and didn't fit at all. He continued with the mixture, and the tailor had to take fresh measurements at Christmas—well, he didn't quite have to put on a couple of overcoats so as to make a shadow, but the measurements round his waist were just half what they were twelve months before. Like a sensible man, he always recommends Mr. Russell now wherever he can. So do I." His book only costs two penny stamps, but is worth a guinea. Send to Woburn House for it.—*Boston Independent*, January 9th, 1897.

CORPULENCY, AND THE CURE—EIGHTEENTH EDITION.

The appearance of an eighteenth edition of Mr. F. Cecil Russell's now famous "Corpulency, and the Cure," constitutes an unusual phenomenon in the publishing world, such as suggests some curious considerations. What, it may be demanded, are the characteristics of the books whose popularity is so enormous as to enable them to run through eighteen editions within a comparatively few years? Some little time ago it became a favourite recreation—much to the advantage of certain publishers—to make out a list of "a hundred books" with which it was suggested all students ought to be familiar. How few of these, the results of the highest efforts of human thought, have reached an eighteenth edition before generations, sometimes centuries, after their original publication has passed away. It would seem, indeed, that immediate popularity can be gained—and, what is more to the purpose, steadily retained up to an eighteenth edition—only by ministering, in a remarkable and exceptional degree, to the requirements of stern utility. This, indeed, is what Mr. Russell has accomplished by the intr duction of the novel method of curing obesity, which is fully described in his book. This compendious little volume of 256 pages may be had (post free), we note, by sending two penny stamps to the author's offices, Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. The enormous circulation represented by these eighteen editions is fully accounted for by a perusal of the book. It is quite evident that—as is proved by the evidence of thousands of cases successfully treated—Mr. Russell has completely revolutionised the treatment of corpulence. He has shown that any person may get rid of the superfluous fat carried on the body within, at the outside, a few weeks' time, and at such a rapid rate that 7lb. or 8lb. are frequently disposed of within a week. This is done, too, without undue interference with the ordinary habits of life in respect to eating and drinking, and—paradoxical as it may appear—the amount of food consumed is generally increased during the process of weight-diminution. The weighing-machine is Mr. Russell's ally, constantly appealed to, in order to place the results beyond doubt. Such conditions are so obviously suitable to the requirements of fat persons that their generally growing desire to study the book is easily explained.—*Grantham Times*, January 9th, 1897.

HOW TO CURE CORPULENCY.

The main feature of fat in the animal body has been made the subject of much spirited discussion: on the one hand, it was contended that satisfactory evidence exists of the conversion of starch and saccharine substances into fat by separation of carbon and oxygen. the change somewhat resembling that of the vinous fermentation; it was urged, *per contra*, that oily or fatty matter is invariably present in the food supplied to the domestic animals, and that this fat is merely absorbed and deposited in the body in a slightly modified state. The question has now been decided in favour of the first of these views, which was enunciated by Professor Liebig, the very chemist who formerly advocated the second opinion. By a series of very beautiful experiments. MM. Dumas and Milne Edwards proved that bees feeding exclusively upon sugar were still capable of producing wax. Dr. Ebstein advocates the use of fat in cases of corpulency, while other doctors, as high up the ladder of medical fame, recommend lean meats, while others worry the unhappy victims of obesity by insisting upon administering copious draughts of hot water, fasting, a most pernicious practice, we believe. Although so much has been written on this subject by the learned foreigners of the medical faculty, no theory is more effectual in the reduction of corpulency than the one advanced by Mr. F. C. Russell, the author of "Corpulency, and the Cure" (256 pages), an interesting little brochure, now in the eighteenth edition, which can, be bought for two penny stamps from the publishers at Woburn House, Store Street, Bedford Square, London, W.C. He goes in for facts and not fancies, and practically says, first ascertain your correct weight; then drink three doses of a vegetable compound, perfectly harmless of a most agreeable flavour; then step upon a weighing-machine in twenty-four hours, and see if you have not lost 2lb. or more of unhealthy fat. The book is well worth reading.—*Southport Visitor*, January 19th, 1897.

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Answers to Correspondents.

THIS number contains the last instalment of the Picture Puzzle Competition in *Short Stories*. Fasten the lower half of each sheet together, and inclose them in an envelope marked "Peers," to reach this office by the first post on Saturday, June 12th. As this number of *Short Stories* is published three days earlier than usual, this will give you ample time. In asking you to inclose a small subscription to the FRESH AIR FUND, I should like to say that on the last occasion readers of *Short Stories* responded liberally, and I hope that this time they will do even better.

B. S.—Wellington was taller than Napoleon by something like an inch and a half. The latter was 5ft. 7in. in height.

TIM.—The list of celebrities who do not smoke include such great names as Gladstone, Ruskin, Swinburne, Blackie, and Grace. On the other hand there are perhaps an even greater number of celebrated individuals who are scarcely ever seen without a cigar or pipe in their mouths.

G. T.—Before a foreigner can become naturalised in this country, he must first of all reside within the United Kingdom for not less than five years. Having accomplished this, he should apply to the Home Office.

CYRIL.—All books sent to the Queen with the idea of them being accepted must be specially bound and the Royal Arms stamped in the corner.

S.—THE seasons are supposed to commence on the following dates, although of course, we cannot guarantee their safe and punctual arrival:

Spring ..... March 20th.
Summer.....June 21st.
Autumn.....Sept. 23rd.
Winter .....Dec. 21st.

ALICE.—In the London Zoo, there are something like 2,563 animals, viz., 669 mammals, 1,427 birds, and 467 reptiles. Of course this number is constantly being added to.

ALEX has heard that many individuals are making handsome incomes at the present time by writing advertisements in an attractive and novel form, and asks us whether there is any truth in it.————Undoubtedly. Advertisers are always pleased to consider novel and smart ideas for advertising their goods, and, if any ever occur to you, submit them to some of the large advertisers, who, you may be sure, will pay handsomely, if they think the idea worthy of acceptance.

VOLUNTEER.—You must serve twenty years as a volunteer before you become entitled to a long-service medal.

CLAPHAM JUNCTION asks why all the porters on the South-Western Railway wear red ties. Because they have no option, CLAPHAM JUNCTION. It is part of the men's uniform, and red is selected so that in case of emergency the scarf my prove useful as a danger signal.

H. R. R.—Large, wide-spread nostrils are supposed to denote ample lungs and good health.

S. T. S.—Yes, it is quite true that a large amount was offered some years back by the Government of New South Wales for means of extinguishing the rabbit pest. The exact reward offered was £25,000, but we do not think it was ever gained by anybody.

CLERK.—I fully sympathise with you in your difficulty, but do not advise you to emigrate to either of the countries you mention, for although the employment of women in England has made good berths very much scarcer for men, the competition is still keener in Germany and Holland. Whenever girls can be employed they are taken in preference to young men; indeed, the clerks and bookkeepers of the Munich bank are nearly all women.

W. R. B.—It certainly does seem strange that the British Army should be almost the only one that does not employ trained dogs as spies and messengers. The Germans, French, Austrians, Russians, and Italians have all found them of great assistance in times of war.

NEWLY MARRIED.—By all means confide your difficulties to your wife. Her sympathy is sure to go a long way towards removing them. Have no secrets from one another, for if your union is to be a truly happy one there must be absolute trust and mutual confidence between you.

E. R.—Hamburg possesses the largest telephone exchange. It can accommodate 10,000 subscribers. No other exchange has more than 6,000 subscribers.

BOB asks which is the largest kitchen in the world.————The Bon Marché in Paris. This mammoth establishment gives employment to some 4,000 people. The smallest kettle in the building is capable of holding 100 gallons, and the largest 500, whilst each of the fifty roasting pans is big enough for 300 cutlets.

L. J.—On the average concert grand pianoforte, a note struck with a moderately hard blow will continue to vibrate audibly for about twenty-five seconds.

H. H.—The Prince of Wales was married at the age of twenty-two, the Duke of Edinburgh at thirty, and the Duke of Connaught at twenty-nine.

L. M. is about to be married to the "dearest little girl in the world," and candidly tells me that with the exception of one thing he would be the happiest man alive. But a little thing prevents this, for although for many years his character has been absolutely unstained, he regrets that in his earlier days he was once tempted to commit an offence which was followed by a brief term of imprisonment. He ever regrets that unfortunate time, especially at the present moment, for he scarcely likes the idea of marrying a girl who believes him to be the soul of virtue and honour. "What shall I do under the circumstances?" he asks.————Make a clean breast of the whole affair to your *fiancée* who, if she loves you to the extent you describe, will not only forgive you, but think far more of you than if you waited until after the wedding-day to make the revelation.

ADA.—You should certainly not draw your conclusions of a man by what he tells you, but rather, as in the case of a watch, judge him by his works.

E. B. is engaged to a lady who, unfortunately, numbers a good many young fellows amongst her acquaintances. But it is not this that E. B. objects to, for, as he says, this fact only goes to show what a charming, irresistible maiden she is, but E. B. dislikes to hear her address them all by their christian names.————That is very probable. But surely you can prevail upon your sweetheart to drop a habit which gives you pain. Just tell her your feelings in regard to this matter, and we feel sure that if the young lady has any affection for you, she will take care not to continue the objectional practice any longer.

Notice to Competitors.

IN all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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One Year	6s. 6d.
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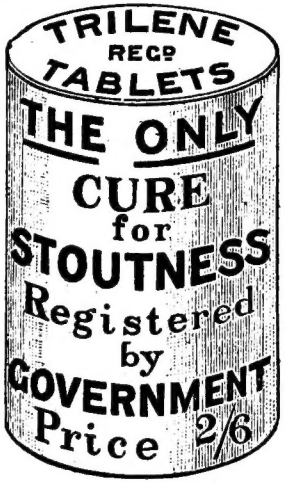
Can be **CURED** by taking

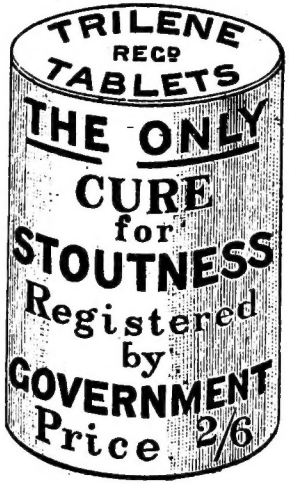
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send **2s. 6d.** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION**, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Illustrated Family Novelist, November 30th, 1895, says: "A great many women who are plump by nature worry about their stoutness. However, there are some perfectly safe remedies for embonpoint, among them being the Trilene Tablets, which are not only safe, but absolutely beneficial to the general health, and speedily produce the desired effect."

MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"3, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

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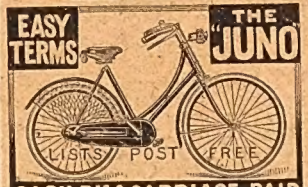

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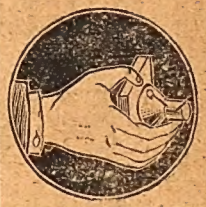

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